Catena Aurea.

Bibl. Lit.
Comment. (N.T.)

Catena Aurea.

COMMENTARY

ON THE

FOUR GOSPELS,

COLLECTED OUT OF THE

WORKS OF THE FATHERS

BY

S. THOMAS AQUINAS.

ST. LUKE.—VOL. I.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

The following Compilation not being admissible into the Library of the Fathers from the date of some few of the authors introduced into it, the Editors of the latter work have been led to publish it in a separate form, being assured that those who have subscribed to their Translations of the entire Treatises of the ancient Catholic divines, will not feel less interest, or find less benefit, in the use of so very judicious and beautiful a selection from them. The Editors refer to the Preface for some account of the natural and characteristic excellences of the work, which will be found as useful in the private study of the Gospels, as it is well adapted for family reading, and full of thought for those who are engaged in religious instruction.

Oxford, May 6, 1841.

PREFACE.

The Catena on St. Luke differs from those on the three other Gospels, in its more frequent citations from the Greek writers. For besides the Commentaries of S. Ambrose and Bede, and certain Homilies of S. Augustine and Gregory, there seems to have been no other Latin work on St. Luke's Gospel which St. Thomas could have used. How far he was himself acquainted with Greek, it seems difficult to determine; but from the expression *feci transferri,* in his preface to the three later Gospels, it has been supposed, that for this part of his work he employed others to make translations for him from the Greek writers, which he afterwards inserted in his Catena, not always (as he says himself) giving the very words, but frequently only the sense of the passage.

From the ignorance of the Greek language at that time, it was not to be supposed that these translations would be free from error; and when we couple with this the carelessness of transcribers, we cannot be surprised that in course of time the text of the Catena should have become very corrupt, and the sense of whole passages, but particularly the names of their authors, involved in great doubt and obscurity. The mistakes on this latter point Nicolai thinks were chiefly owing to the abbreviated form and character in which the names were written, so that one name was often put for another, from its similarity; as Theophilus for Theophylact; while others were altogether omitted. In Nicolai's edition, however, (which has been followed in the present volume,) very great corrections were made, for which, as

the original works of most of the Greek writers quoted by St. Thomas no longer exist, he was chiefly indebted to the Greek Catenæ. By their assistance not only was the text carefully restored and amended from the original Greek, but the references verified afresh, and many for the first time supplied.

It may here then perhaps be useful to give first some account of the Catenæ used by Nicolai, and others which have been referred to in the following translation; next to mention those Fathers whose names are cited in St. Thomas, but their works from which his extracts are taken are either not to be found at all, or at least only fragments of them, in the published editions; and after them a number of inferior writers whom St. Thomas had included under the general title of Græcus, but whose names have now been furnished from the Greek Catenæ.

(1.) The Catena of most use to Nicolai was one formerly in the Mazarin, now in the Royal Library at Paris, (Montf. MSS., p. 1339.) It is said to be of the 13th century, and is compiled from fifty-six Fathers, whose names are clearly marked. But it embraces only the twelve first chapters of St. Luke. For the twelve latter he employed Corderius; but it is much to be regretted that he had not possessed the remainder of the Mazarin MSS. which seems to be existing in the Vatican from the description Maii gives of a fragment he discovered there; and Montfaucon says of the former part, that not the sixth part of it is contained in Corderius. Besides, Corderius is not at all to be trusted as to the names of authors, as may be seen from Maii [a] and Lambecius [b].

Maii has published a considerable part of another Catena, in his ninth vol. Vet. Script. Its date is very near the end

[a] Maii 6th vol. Scriptores Classici, pp. 15—17.

[b] Com. Bibl. Cæsar. Vindob., vol. iii. p. 163.

of the 11th century, and it is entitled, *ἀπὸ τῆς ἐκλογῆς τοῦ Νικητοῦ Σεῤῥῶν.* He ascribes the first Catena to the same author, and a similar title is prefixed to a MS. in the Coislin Library, (Bibl. Coisl. No. 201.) of a later date, and containing a Catena on St. Luke of sixty-two Fathers. These three Catenæ, though differing in date, yet very similar in the names and number of the authors cited, must all be traced to the same source. Nor does there seem any reason why they should not be successive copies, only increased as time went on, of the original MS. of Nicetas, whose name they bear. Nicetas flourished about 1077. He was at first Deacon at Constantinople, then Bishop of Serræ in Macedonia, afterwards Archbishop of Heraclea in Thrace. He is proved by Wolf (De Catenis) to have been the author of a Catena on Job, generally assigned to Olympiodorus; and Lambecius (v. 63. iii. 81.) describes a Catena of his on the Psalms. That published by Possinus on St. Matthew, from a MS. in the Library of the Elector of Bavaria, contains extracts from thirty Fathers, with a prologue and several expositions under the name of Nicetas. It seems very probable then that Nicetas was the author of a new class of Catenæ, far exceeding in size and completeness those which previously existed. For among a great number of MSS. Catenæ on the Gospels in the Paris, Venice, and Vienna Libraries which bear date of the 10th or 11th centuries, there are scarcely any which number more than twelve Fathers, none certainly which approach to the extent of those above mentioned.

Of the MSS. Catenæ on St. Luke, of this date, some have the title prefixed to them, "From Chrysostom and other Fathers." Some again bear the names of Cyril and Origen, but by far the greater number, particularly in the Paris Library, are ascribed to Titus Bostrensis. It is however quite plain, that the Titus Bostrensis, who flourished under

Julian in the fourth century, could not have been the author of a Catena containing extracts from the works of Cyril, Chrysostom, and Isidore of Peleusium, who all lived some time later. Combefis (Bibl. Concion. Rec. Auct. p. 49.) thinks that this Titus wrote Commentaries on the Gospels of which only fragments remain, and also the four books ascribed to him against the Manicheans; but that there was a later writer of the same name, perhaps in the 6th century, who was the author of this Catena, and of the Commentary published under the name of Titus in the Bibl. Pat. For he says that there exist, in a MS. Catena on St. Matthew, passages assigned to Titus, which are not in that on St. Luke, and are very far superior to it. And these he conceives to belong to the elder Titus. It seems however most probable, that this Catena on St. Luke which Combefis speaks of, is an abridgment of a larger one, which was compiled from the ancient Titus and other later Fathers[c], and by the same anonymous hand which also compiled that on Matthew, for the latter is always referred to by the former whenever St. Luke repeats what has been before related by St. Matthew[d].

There is the same reference also in the Commentary on St. Luke above mentioned, which was first published in Greek with a Latin Translation by Peltanus, (Bib. Pat. Gr. Lat. 1548.) which is plainly nothing but an abridgment of the Catena, though in a different form, making no distinction between the separate authors.

Of the extracts given by St. Thomas from Titus, the greater number are accordingly to be found in the two Catenæ on St. Luke and St. Matthew, edited by Dr. Cramer, from Paris and Bodl. MSS. It appears also that these Catenæ are

[c] Kollarius (Supp. Lamb. p. 19. cod. 4.) mentions a very old MS. containing a Catena on St. Luke, from Titus and Origen, to whom he thinks later Fathers were added, at first inserted in the margin, but afterwards incorporated into the text.

[d] Conf. Bodl. Auct. T. 1. 4. Paris. Coisl. 23. Montf.

substantially the same as those mentioned by Savile, (vol. viii. p. 218.) of which the one on Matthew was published in a Latin Translation by Chris. Serrarigius at Venice, 1554, and is found also in the Lat. Ed. of Chrysostom, 2 vol. p. 1151 under the title of Libellus Questionum. Paris, 1588.

(2.) The extracts cited by St. Thomas from Chrysostom are chiefly taken from the Homilies on Matthew, but there are some which seem to be gathered from different parts of his works by some writer who was well acquainted with them. Wastell assigns these to John of Jerusalem, whom he thinks he has proved to be the author of the Opus Imperfectum, generally imputed to Chrysostom, as well as of a Commentary on St. Luke, frequently quoted therein, and from which therefore he concludes these passages have been derived. However this may be, they are clearly from their occurrence in the oldest Catenæ to be attributed to some very early imitator or epitomist of Chrysostom.

The greater part of Origen's Homilies on St. Luke are contained in St. Thomas, which St. Jerome tells us were written by Origen when he was young. Jerome gives a Latin translation of them, to which in the Ben. Ed. are affixed fragments of the Greek collected by Grabe, but they are published more at length both in Greek and Latin by Gallandi, Bibl. Pat. vol. 14. Maii has given some extracts in the Greek (6 vol. Class. Auct.) not in Gallandi. A passage on Luke viii. 4. quoted by St. Thomas, is found in Origen on the Proverbs, published in the Bibl. Pat. as above. It may be remarked, that in the MSS. in the Library of St. Mark at Venice, from which Gallandi has published these works, what is ascribed to Titus and Origen, is in the Paris MSS. given to Titus alone.

A Commentary on St. Luke by Cyril is very largely quoted throughout this Catena. Nothing of the kind exists in the published Editions of his works, but Maii has lately given

almost the whole of it in his 6th vol. Cl. Auct. A remarkable passage on the Eucharist quoted by St. Thomas, Luke xxii. 17. is found there, p. 371.

Several quotations from Athanasius, which have not been found in his published works, are supposed to be taken from a Commentary on St. Luke, of which a few fragments only remain, some in the Ben. Ed. and a few more in Montfaucon's Ed. 1706.

A Commentary of Eusebius on St. Luke, but imperfect, has been published by Maii, (1st vol. Script. Vet.) as well as parts of his three books of Evangelical Questions, which seem to take in much of what is wanting to complete the Commentary on St. Luke. These have been edited from a MS. in the Vatican of the 10th century, and supply several of the quotations given by St. Thomas.

(3.) Of the other Greek writers cited by St. Thomas, and in the earlier editions of the Catena Aurea under no other title than Græcus, almost all have been found in the *συναγωγὴ ἐξηγήσεων* published by Maii from the second Catena of Nicetas before mentioned. Some of them are but little known, and may therefore require a slight notice.

Alexander, a monk, perhaps a native of Cyprus, who wrote a book *De Inventione S. Crucis,* edited by Gretser, Gr. Lat. in his Tom. de Cruce, supposed also to be the same Alexander who recited an Oration on the Apostle Barnabas before the Abp. of Cyprus. See Leo Allatius de Symeonum. Sc. p. 99.

Amphilochius Bp. of Iconium in Lycaonia, 370. He was a Cappadocian by birth, and for some time lived a monastic life with S. Basil and Gregory, in 381. Theodosius committed to him the care of the Asiatic Diocese. His principal writings were a work against the Massilian Heretics, which is lost, and several Orations on the events of our Saviour's Life, published by Combefis, 1644.

Antipater, Bp. of Bostrum in Arabia, 460. He is said to have answered the Apology of Eusebius for Origen. There are certain Sermons of his extant on St. John the Baptist, Zacharias, and the Salutation of the B. Virgin, which are among the works ascribed to Metaphrastes. See Leo Allat. p. 89.

Apollinaris, Bp. of Laodicea, celebrated for his opposition to Heathen books in the Christian schools. Before he promulgated his heretical doctrine, 376, he was the friend of Basil, Greg. Naz., Athanasius, and others. His heresy was condemned at Rome, 378. He wrote Commentaries on most of the books of Scripture; part of his Comm. on Luke is given in Maii, 1 vol. Vet. Script. p. 179.

Asterius, Bp. of Amasea in Pontus, flourished 401, under Julian, and wrote Homilies on the Gospels, some of which are in Mag. Bib. Pat. t. 4. and in Combefis Auctarium 1661; and fragments of others in Photius, Bibl. 271.

Evagrius, a Pontian by birth, studied under Greg. Naz. at Constantinople, and afterwards a disciple of S. Macarius in Egypt, wrote many monastic works, of which some are published among the writings of John Damascene.

Eutychius, Patriarch of Constantinople, 553, formerly a monk of Amasea. He wrote a book denying a sensible resurrection from the dead, concerning which there was a dispute held between him and Gregory the Great, then the Apocrisiary of Pope Vigilius at Constantinople. It was afterwards condemned by Tiberius the Emperor. See Greg. Mor. l. 14. c. 29. where the retractation of this work is mentioned.

Isaac, a Syrian by birth, Bp. of Nineve 540, afterwards embraced the monastic life. Wrote several ascetic works, 53 Sermons under the title of *De contemptu mundi,* published Max. Bib. Pat. v. 11. See Lambec. lib. v. p. 73.

Geometer, Combefis places about the 7th century. He

is chiefly known for his Hymns, (published Morell 1691,) in honour of the B. Virgin, and some Homilies; see also Allatius, p. 62.

Macarius the elder, flourished 373, a monk of Scetus and disciple of Antony in Egypt, lived 60 years in the desert, and died 391. Wrote 50 Homilies, *De integritate quæ decet Christianos*, which were published at Paris 1659, and in the works of Greg. Thaumaturgus 1622.

Nilus, Prefect of Constantinople 440. He was a disciple of Chrysostom, and after living for some time a secular life, he entered a monastery at Nitria in Egypt, where he wrote several works chiefly ascetic; these were published by Suares, 1673.

Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople, 858. Deposed in Council of Const. 869. For a list of his works, see Fabricius, vol. xi. c. 35. Some fragments of a Commentary on St. Luke are published by Maii, 1 vol. Script. Vet. but many of the extracts from his works in Catenæ on the Gospels are to be found in the Amphilochian Questions, of which some have been edited by Wolf, Schottus, and others; but several lately edited by Maii have never before been published; they are taken from a MS. in the Vatican, containing the whole 313.

Severus, Bp. of Antioch, 513; he was the first of the Monophysites, and was condemned by Justin, 519, for opposing the Council of Chalcedon. See Niceph. Hist. Ecc. 16. c. 35. His Commentary on Luke, which Montfaucon mentions, (Coisl. 54.) Maii gives, (6th vol. Cl. Auct. p. 418.)

Symeon Metaphrastes and Logotheta, born at Constantinople, secretary to the Emperor Leo, began to write his Lives of the Saints, 913. according to Cave and Allatius. Oudinus places him in the 12th century. His life of St. Luke is quoted by St. Thomas, as also a Commentary on

that Gospel, which does not however exist except in the Gr. Catenæ.

Symeon, Prefect of the Monastery of S. Maman in Xerocercus at Constantinople, 1050, wrote 33 Orations, *De Fide et Moribus tum Christianis tum Monasticis,* published in Latin, 1603, at Ingolstadt by Pontanus. See Allat. 167.

Theophanes is generally cited in the Greek Catenæ on St. Luke, together with Eusebius. Corderius doubts whether he was Theophanes Cerameus, Bp. of Tauromenia in Sicily, who wrote annals from Dioclesian to the Emperor Michael, and Homilies *In Dominicas et Festa;* or Theophanes, Bp. of Nicæa, who wrote against the Jews. Maii thinks the name has been mistaken for the *Theophania Eusebii.*

Victor, Presbyter of Antioch. See Preface to Catena on St. Mark.

Of the Latin Fathers quoted by St. Thomas, Bede is the only one which requires any mention here. His Commentary on St. Luke, as we learn from his letter to Acca prefixed to it, is chiefly a compilation from the writings of the four Doctors of the Latin Church, but particularly St. Ambrose. Some things however he has added himself "quæ auctor lucis ei aperuit," and from these St. Thomas has chiefly taken his extracts. The Glosses not to be found in the Glossa ordinaria or interlinearis, are supposed to be St. Thomas's own.

These introductory remarks have been supplied by the friend, who has translated the portion of St. Thomas's Commentary to which they relate, and which is contained in the following Volume, Thomas Dudley Ryder, M. A. of Oriel College.

J. H. N.

PREFACE

TO THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO

ST. LUKE.

Among those mysteries of Christ's Incarnation which the Prophet Esaias expressly and plainly foretels, he says, *I will clothe the heavens with blackness, and make sackcloth their covering. The Lord hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how by my word to uphold the weary. He wakeneth me at morn. At morn He wakeneth my ear to hearken unto Him as my Master.* Isa. 50, 3, 4.

From these words we may understand the subject-matter of St. Luke's Gospel, the method of his writing, the object and condition of the writer. Augustine. St. Luke seems to dwell more than the other Evangelists upon the Priestly lineage and person of our Lord, and hence he has been represented under the symbol of a calf, because that is the principal victim of the Priest. Aug. de Consen. Evang. i. 2, 6.

Ambrose. The calf being the Priestly victim, this book of the Gospel aptly answers to it, commencing as it does with the Priests, and ending in the calf, which, taking upon itself the sins of men, was sacrificed for the life of the whole world. This sacrifice of the calf also St. Luke describes with greater fulness than the rest. Gloss. As then St. Luke's intention was mainly to set forth the Passion of Christ, the subject of his Gospel may be signified by these words; *I will clothe the heavens with blackness, and make sackcloth their covering.* Ambr. Prol. in Luc.

For literally at Christ's Passion there was darkness, and the faith of the disciples was clouded. JEROME. And Christ was despised and made as one of no account, and His face was hidden and put to shame, that in the human flesh the Divine Power might be concealed. ID. St. Luke's style, as well in his Gospel as in the Acts of the Apostles, is more polished than that of the others, and has a tone of secular eloquence. Hence it is added, *The Lord hath given me the tongue of the learned.* AMBROSE. For although the divine Scriptures set aside the exercise of secular wisdom as of that which is rather decked out with a show of words than based upon true reason, yet will those who seek therein find the very examples which they consider most worthy of admiration. For St. Luke, while he has preserved a kind of historic order in his narrative, and made known to us more of our Lord's wonderful works than the other Evangelists, has at the same time contrived to unite the excellences of each kind of wisdom in the course of his Gospel. What more extraordinary in natural wisdom than his revelation that the Holy Spirit was also the Creator of our Lord's Incarnation! In the same book, he teaches morals, as, for example, *in what manner I ought to love my enemy.* Again, he appeals to my reason, when I read, *for he that is faithful in a little will be faithful also in much.*

Hieron. sup. Esai. 53, 3. sup. Esai. 6, 9. Ambr. sup. Luke 6, 27. 32—35. Luke 16, 10.

EUSEBIUS. St. Luke, a native of Antioch, by profession a Physician, has left us concerning that medicine which he had received from the Apostles either through his intercourse with them or by tradition, two medical books, whereby not our bodies but our souls may be healed. And hence it follows, *That I should know how by my word to uphold the weary.* JEROME. For he says that he has received the word from the Lord, by which he supports the weary and wanderer, and restores them to health. GREEK EXPOSITOR. St. Luke, being by nature of a noble and ardent mind, acquired in his youth the learning of the Greeks. He made himself perfectly acquainted with Grammar and Poetry, as well as complete master of the art of Rhetoric and the power of persuasion. Nor was he surpassed by any one in the gifts of Philosophy; last of all, he learns Medicine. And now by his natural quickness having drunk deep enough of human wisdom, he takes

Euseb. Hist. iii. 4. Hieron. sup. Esai. 50, 4. Metaphrastes in vit. Luc.

flight to something higher. He hastens accordingly to Judæa, and gains access to the presence and hearing of Christ. Being soon convinced of the truth, he becomes a true disciple of Christ, and has frequent intercourse with his Master. Hence it follows, *He wakeneth me at morn,* (in my youth, as it were, to secular wisdom). *At morn He wakeneth my ear* (to divine wisdom) *to hearken unto Him as my Master,* i. e. Christ Himself. EUSEBIUS. It is said that St. Luke wrote his Gospel as it was declared to him by the mouth of St. Paul, as St. Mark also wrote those things which were told him by St. Peter. CHRYSOSTOM. Each of them imitated his master; the one Paul, flowing more rapidly than the torrent; the other Peter, studying conciseness. AUGUSTINE. They wrote at a time when they both were able to receive the approbation not only of the Church of Christ, but of the Apostles themselves, still abiding in the flesh. And thus much may suffice to have been said by way of Preface.

Euseb. sup.

Chrys. sup. Matt. Hom. iv.

Aug. de Con. Evang. iv. 9.

COMMENTARY

ON THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO

ST. LUKE.

CHAP. I.

Ver. 1. Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us,

2. Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word:

3. It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus,

4. That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed.

Eusebius. St. Luke at the commencement of his Gospel has told us the reason of his writing, which was, that many others had rashly taken upon themselves to give accounts of those things of which he had a more certain knowledge. And this is his meaning when he says, *Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of things.* Euseb. Eccl. Hist. iii. 4.

Ambrose. For as many among the Jewish people prophesied by inspiration of the Spirit of God, but others were false prophets rather than prophets, so now also have many attempted to write Gospels which the good money-changer re- Ambr. Expos. Ev. Luc. l. i. c. i.

fuses to pass. One gospel is mentioned which the twelve Apostles are said to have written; another Basilides presumed to write; and another is said to have been by Matthias.

Beda in procem. Lucæ. BEDE. The many who are mentioned, he reckons not so much by their number, as by the variety of their manifold heresies; men who were not endued with the gift of the Holy Spirit, but engaging in a vain work, have rather set forth in order a relation of events, than woven a true history. AMBROSE. Now they who have attempted to set forth these things in order have laboured by themselves, and have not succeeded in what they attempted. For without the assistance of man come the gifts and the grace of God, which, when it is infused, is wont so to flow, that the genius of the writer is not exhausted, but ever abounding. He well says therefore, *Of things which have been fully accomplished among us,* or which abound among us. For that which abounds is lacking to none, and no one doubts about that which is fulfilled, since the accomplishment builds up our faith, and the end manifests it. Tit. Bost. in procem. Lucæ. TITUS BOSTRENSIS. He says, *of things,* because not by shadows, as the heretics say, did Jesus accomplish His advent in the flesh, but being as He was *the Truth,* so in very truth He performed His work. Orig. Hom. i. in Luc. ORIGEN. The effect upon his own mind, St. Luke explains by the expression, *of the things which have been fully accomplished among us,* i.e. have had their full manifestation among us, (as the Greek word πεπληροφορημένων signifies, which the Latin cannot express in one word,) for he had been convinced of them by sure faith and reason, and wavered not in any thing. Chrys. Comm. in Act. Apost. Hom. i. CHRYSOSTOM. The Evangelist was so far from being content with his single testimony, that he refers the whole to the Apostles, seeking from them a confirmation of his words; and therefore he adds, *as they handed them down to us, who were themselves from the beginning eyewitnesses.*

Euseb sup. EUSEBIUS. Luke is a sure witness, because he obtained his knowledge of the truth either from St. Paul's instructions, or the instructions and traditions of the other Apostles, sup. who were themselves eyewitnesses from the beginning. CHRYS. He says, *were eyewitnesses,* because this is our chief ground for believing in a thing, that we derive it from those who were actually eyewitnesses. ORIGEN. It is plain

that of one kind of knowledge, the end is in the knowledge itself, as in geometry; but of another kind, the end is counted to be in the work, as in medicine; and so it is in the word of God, and therefore having signified the knowledge by the words *were themselves eyewitnesses,* he points out the work by what follows, *and were ministers of the word.* AMBROSE. This expression is used, not that we should suppose the ministry of the word to consist rather in seeing than hearing, but that, because by *the word* was meant not a word that can be spoken by the mouth, but one of real existence, we may understand *that* to have been not a common, but a Heavenly Word, to which the Apostles ministered. CYRIL. In what he says of the Apostles having been eyewitnesses of the word, he agrees with John, who says, *The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory.* For the Word by means of the flesh was made visible. AMBROSE. Now not only did they see the Lord in the body, but also in the Word. For *they* saw the Word, who with Moses and Elias saw the glory of the Word. Others did not see it, who could only see the body. ORIGEN. It is written in Exodus, *The people saw the voice of the Lord.* Now a voice is rather heard than seen. But it was so written, to shew us that men see the voice of the Lord with other eyes, which they only have who are worthy of them. Again in the Gospel, it is not the voice that is perceived, but the Word, which is more excellent than the voice. THEOPHYLACT. By these words it is plainly implied, that Luke was not a disciple from the beginning, but became one in course of time; others were disciples from the beginning, as Peter, and the sons of Zebedee. BEDE. Nevertheless both Matthew and John were obliged in many things that they wrote to consult those who had had means of knowing the infancy, childhood, and genealogy of our Lord, and of seeing the things which He did. ORIGEN. St. Luke hereby explains to us the source of his writing; seeing that what things he wrote, he gained not from report, but had himself traced them up from the beginning. Hence it follows, *It seemed good to me also, having carefully investigated every thing from the very first, to write to thee in order, most excellent Theophilus.* AMBROSE. When he

Cyril. non occ.

Exod. 20, 18.

Theoph. Præf. in Luc.

says, *It seemed good to me,* he does not deny that it seemed good to God: for it is God who predisposes the wills of men. Now no one has doubted that this book of the Gospel is more full of details than the others; by these words then he claims to himself, not any thing that is false, but the truth; and therefore he says, "It seemed good to me, having investigated every thing, to write." Not to write
John 21, 25. every thing, but from a review of every thing; "for if all the things which Jesus did were written, I do not think the world itself could contain them." But purposely has Luke passed by things that were written by others, in order that each book of the Gospel might be distinguished by certain mys-
Theoph. in loc. teries and miracles peculiar to itself. THEOPHYLACT. He writes to Theophilus, a man probably of some distinction, and a governor; for the form, *Most excellent,* was not used except to rulers and governors. As for example, Paul says
Acts 26, 25. Beda sup. to Festus, *Most excellent Festus.* BEDE. Theophilus means, "loving God," or "being loved by God." Whoever then loves God, or desires to be loved by Him, let him think this Gospel to have been written to him, and preserve it as a gift presented to him, a pledge entrusted to his care. The promise was not to explain the meaning of certain new and strange things to Theophilus, but to set forth the truth of those words in which he had been instructed; as it is added, *That thou mightest know the truth of those words in which thou hast been instructed;* that is, "that thou mightest be able to know in what order each thing was
Chrys. sup. said or done by the Lord." CHRYSOSTOM. Or it may be, "That thou mightest feel certain and satisfied as to the truth of those things which thou hast heard, now that thou beholdest the same in writing." THEOPHYLACT. For frequently, when a thing is asserted by any one, and not expressed in writing, we suspect it of falsehood; but when a man has written what he asserts, we are the more inclined to believe it, as if, unless he thought it to be true, he would
Photius, comment. in Luc. not commit it to writing. GREEK EX. The whole preface of this Evangelist contains two things; first, the condition of those who wrote Gospels before him, (Matthew and Mark for example;) secondly, the reason why he also himself proposed to write one.

Having said, "attempted," a word which may be applied both to those who presumptuously engage upon a subject, and those who reverently handle it, he determines the doubtful expression by two additions; first, by the words, *Of things which have been fully accomplished among us;* and secondly, *As they handed them down to us, who were eyewitnesses from the beginning.* The word *handed down* seems to shew, that the eyewitnesses themselves had a commission to transmit the truth. For as they handed it down, so it became others also receiving it in due order, in their turn to publish it. But from the not depositing in writing what had been delivered, several difficulties through lapse of time sprang up. Rightly then did those who had received the tradition from the first eyewitnesses of the Word, establish it in writing for the whole world; thereby repelling falsehood, destroying forgetfulness, and making up from tradition itself a perfect whole.

5. There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judæa, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth.

6. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.

7. And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were now well stricken in years.

CHRYSOSTOM. St. Luke commences the history of his Gospel with Zacharias and the birth of John; relating one marvellous event before another, the less before the greater. For since a virgin was about to become a mother, it had been fore-ordained by grace that the old should previously conceive. He fixes the time, when he says, *In the days of Herod,* and in the following words adds his rank, *king of Judæa.* There was another Herod, who killed John; he was tetrarch, whereas this one was king. BEDE. Now the time of Herod, i.e. of a foreign king, bears witness to our Lord's coming, for it

(Chrys. non occ. in Matt. cap. ii.; Beda, in Luc. Evang.)

Gen. 49, 12. had been foretold, *The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come.* For from the time that our fathers came out of Egypt, they were governed by judges of their own nation, until the Prophet Samuel; and then by kings, until the carrying away to Babylon. But after the return from Babylon, the chief power was in the hands of priests, until the time of Hyrcanus, who was both king and high priest. He was slain by Herod, after which the government of the kingdom was delivered over by the command of Augustus Cæsar to this same Herod, a foreigner, in whose thirty-first year, according to the prophecy we have mentioned, *Shiloh* came.

Ambrose. Divine Scripture teaches us with respect to those whom we commemorate, that not only the characters of the men themselves, but of their parents also, ought to be praised, that they might be distinguished by an inheritance, as it were, handed down to them of unspotted purity. Now not only from his parents, but also from his ancestors, St. John derives his illustrious descent, a descent not exalted by secular power, but venerable from its sanctity. Complete then is that praise which comprehends birth, character, office, actions, and judgments.

The office was that of the Priesthood, as it is said, *A certain Priest of the name of Zacharias.* Bede. For John was allotted a Priestly tribe, that he might with the more authority herald forth a change of priesthood. Ambrose. His birth is implied in the mention made of his ancestors. *Of the course of Abia,* i.e. of high rank among the noblest families. Bede. There were Princes of the Sanctuary or High Priests, both of the sons of Eleazar and the sons of Thamar, whose courses according to their respective services when they entered into the House of God David divided into twenty-four lots, of which the family of Abia (from which Zacharias was descended) obtained the eighth lot. But it was not without meaning that the first preacher of the new covenant was born with the rights of the eighth lot; because as the old Covenant is often expressed by the seventh number on account of the Sabbath, so frequently is the new Covenant by the eighth, because of the sacrament of our Lord's or our resurrection. Theophylact. Wishing to shew also that

(Margin: Beda, in Homil. in vigil. S. Joh. Bap.; 1 Chron. 24.)

John was legally of Priestly descent, Luke adds, *And his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth,* for it was not permitted to the Jews to take a wife from any other tribe but their own. Elisabeth by interpretation signifies "rest," Zacharias "the remembrance of the land." BEDE. John was born of just parents, that so he might the more boldly give precepts of justice to the people, which he had not learnt as novelties, but had received by right of inheritance from his ancestors. Hence it follows, *And they were both just before God.* AMBROSE. Here their whole character is comprehended in their justice, but it is well said *before God,* for a man by affecting a popular good-will might seem just to me, but not be just before God, if that justice instead of springing from simpleness of heart, was a mere pretence carried on by flattery. Perfect then is the praise, "that a man is just before God;" for he only is perfect who is approved by Him who cannot be deceived. St. Luke comprehends the action in the commandment, the doing justice in the justification. Hence it follows, *walking in all the commandments and justifications of the Lord.* For when we obey the command of heaven we walk in the commandments of the Lord, when we observe justice we seem to possess the justification of the Lord. But to be "blameless" we must "provide things honest, not only before God, but also before men;" there is no blame when both motive and action are alike good, but a too austere righteousness often provokes censure. A righteous act may also be done unrighteously, as when a man out of ostentation gives largely to the poor, which is not without just cause of blame. It follows, *And they had no son, because Elisabeth was barren.* CHRYSOSTOM. Not only Elisabeth, but the wives of the Patriarchs also, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, were barren, which was counted a disgrace among the ancients. Not that their barrenness was the effect of sin, since all were just and virtuous, but ordained rather for your benefit, that when you saw a virgin giving birth to the Lord, you might not be faithless, or perplexing your mind with respect to the womb of the barren. THEOPHYLACT. And that you might learn that the law of God seeketh not a bodily increase of sons but a spiritual, both were far advanced, not only in the body but in the

Prov. 3, 4.

Chrys. ex Hom. in Gen. 49.

Ps. 84, 6. 1 Thess. 5, 5. Spirit, "making ascents in their heart[b]," having their life as the day not as the night, and walking honestly as in the day.

8. And it came to pass, that while he executed the Priest's office before God in the order of his course,

9. According to the custom of the Priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord.

10. And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense.

Bede. The Lord appointed by the hand of Moses one High Priest, at whose death another was to succeed in due order. This was observed until the time of David, who by the command of the Lord increased the number of the Priests; and so at this time Zacharias is said to have been performing his Priest's office in the order of his course, as it follows: *But it came to pass, when Zacharias was performing the Priest's office in the order of his course before God, according to the custom of the Priesthood, his lot was, &c.* Ambrose. Zacharias seems here to be designated High Priest, because into the second tabernacle went the High Priest alone once
Heb. 9, 8. every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and the sins of the people. Bede. It was not by a new lot that he was chosen when the incense was to be burnt, but by the old lot, whereby according to the order of his Priesthood he succeeded in the course of Abia. It follows, *And all the multitude of the people, &c.* Incense was ordered to be carried into the Holy of Holies by the High Priest, the whole people waiting without the temple. It was to be on the tenth day of the seventh month, and this day was to be called the day of expiation or propitiation, the mystery of which day the Apostle explaining to the Hebrews,

[b] Ascensiones in corde ponentes. Vulg. Jerome reads 'semitæ,' and other versions have 'viæ stratæ,' the literal translation of the Hebrew word מסלות, which our own version has followed, 'whose ways.' The LXX reads ἀναβάσεις. The Fathers commonly explain ascensiones by 'gradus virtutum,' as of one gradually advancing in virtue and rising up from earthly things to divine; conf. 2 Cor. 4, 16; Phil. 3, 13. They refer also to the 'Cantica graduum,' or the fifteen Psalms, (119 to 133,) sung by the priests on going up the fifteen steps in the temple. See Augustine in Ps. 83. Greg., lib. iii. c. 7. in Ezech. præf. in Ps 6. Pœn.

points to Jesus as the true High Priest, who in His own blood has entered the secret places of heaven that He might reconcile the Father unto us, and intercede for the sins of those who still wait praying before the doors. AMBROSE. This then is that High Priest who is still sought by lot, for as yet the true High Priest is unknown; for he who is chosen by lot is not obtained by man's judgment. That High Priest therefore was sought for, and another typified, the true High Priest for ever, who not by the blood of victims, but by His own blood, was to reconcile God the Father to mankind. Then indeed there were changes in the Priesthood, now it is unchangeable.

11. And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense.

12. And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.

13. But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.

14. And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth.

CHRYSOSTOM. When Zacharias entered into the temple to offer up prayers to God for all men, interceding between God and man, he saw an angel standing within, as it is said, *And there appeared unto him an angel.* AMBROSE. It is well said that there *appeared* an angel to Zacharias, who suddenly beheld him; and this is the expression especially used by Divine Scripture with respect to angels or God, that what cannot be seen beforehand may be said to *appear.* For things which are the objects of our senses are not seen as He is seen, who is seen only as He will, and whose nature is not to be seen. ORIGEN. And we speak thus not only of the present time, but also of the future. When we shall have passed from the world, God will not appear unto all men, nor will the angels, but unto him only who has a clean heart. The place will neither hinder nor serve any one.

Chrys. Hom. 2. de Inc. Dei Nat.

Chrys. Hom. li. in Matt. CHRYSOSTOM. But the Angel evidently came not in a dream, because the tidings he brought were too hard to be understood, and needed therefore a more visible and marvellous manifestation. Damas. de fide Orthodox. xxiii. DAMASCENE. Angels, however, are revealed not as they really are, but transformed (as men are able to behold them) into whatever the Lord commands. THEOPHYLACT. It is said *the altar of incense,* because the other altar was set apart for burnt offerings. AMBROSE. It was not without good reason that the angel appeared in the temple, for the coming of the true High Priest was now announced, and the Heavenly Sacrifice was preparing at which angels were to minister. For one cannot doubt that an angel stands by where Christ is sacrificed. But he appeared at the right hand of the altar of incense, because he brought down the Ps. 16, 8. token of Divine mercy. *For the Lord is on my right hand, so that I should not be moved.* Chrys. de Inc. Dei Nat. CHRYSOSTOM. The justest of men cannot without fear behold an angel; Zacharias therefore, not sustaining the sight of the Angel's presence, nor able to withstand his brightness, is troubled, as it is added, *Zacharias was troubled.* But as it happens, when a charioteer is frightened, and has let loose his reins, the horses run headlong, and the chariot is overturned; so is it with the soul, when it is taken by any surprise or alarm; as it is here added, *and fear fell upon him.* ORIGEN. A new face suddenly presenting itself to the human eye, troubles and startles the mind. The Angel knowing this to be the nature of man, first dispels the alarm, as it follows, *But the angel said unto him, Fear not.* Athan. in vita Anton. ATHANASIUS. Whereby it is not difficult to discern between good and bad spirits, for if joy has succeeded to fear, we may know that relief has come from God, because the peace of the soul is a sign of the Divine Presence; but if the fear remains unshaken, it is an enemy who is seen. ORIGEN. The Angel not only soothes his fears, but gladdens him with good tidings, adding, *For thy prayer is heard, and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear a son.*

Aug. de Quæst. Evan. l. ii. q. 1. AUGUSTINE. Now here we must first consider that it is not likely that Zacharias, when offering sacrifice for the sins or for the salvation or redemption of the people, would neglect the public petitions, to pray (though himself an old man, and his wife also old) that he might receive children;

and, next, above all that no one prays for what he despairs of ever obtaining. And even up to this time, so much had he despaired of ever having children, that he would not believe, even when an angel promised it to him. The words, *Thy prayer is heard*, must be understood therefore to refer to the people; and as salvation, redemption, and the putting away of the sins of the people was to be through Christ, it is told Zacharias that a son shall be born to him, because that son was ordained to be the forerunner of Christ.

CHRYSOSTOM. Or it means, that this was to be the proof of Chrys. his prayer having been heard, namely, that a son should be sup. born to him, crying, *Behold the Lamb of God!* THEOPHYLACT. As if when Zacharias asks, *How shall I know this?* the Angel answers, Because Elisabeth shall bring forth a son, thou shalt believe that the sins of thy people are forgiven. AMBROSE. Or, as follows; Divine mercy is ever full and overflowing, not narrowed to a single gift, but pouring in an abundant store of blessings; as in this case, where first the fruit of his prayer is promised; and next, that his barren wife shall bear a child, whose name is announced as follows; *And thou shalt call his name John.*

BEDE. It is meant as a token of particular merit, when a man has a name *given* him or *changed* by God. CHRYSOSTOM. Chrys. Which must be the meaning here, for those who from Joann. Hom. their earliest years were destined to shine forth in virtue, xviii. received their names at the very first from a divine source; while those who were to rise up in later years, had a name given them afterwards.

BEDE. John is therefore interpreted, "one in whom is grace, or the grace of God;" by which name it is declared, first, that grace was given to his parents, to whom in their old age a son was to be born; next, to John himself, who was to become great before the Lord; lastly, also to the children of Israel, whom he was to convert to the Lord. Hence it follows, *And he shall be a joy unto thee, and a cause of rejoicing.* ORIGEN. For when a just man is born into the world, the authors of his birth rejoice; but when one is born who is to be as it were an exile to labour and punishment, they are struck with terror and dismay. AMBROSE.

But a saint is not only the blessing of his parents but also the salvation of many; as it follows, *And many shall rejoice at his birth.* Parents are reminded here to rejoice at the birth of saints, and to give thanks. For it is no slight gift of God to vouchsafe unto us children, to be the transmitters of our race, to be the heirs of succession.

15. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.

16. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God.

17. And he shall go before Him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

AMBROSE. Next to his becoming the rejoicing of many, the greatness of his virtue is prophesied; as it is said, *For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord.* The greatness signified is not of the body, but of the soul. Greatness in the sight of the Lord is greatness of soul, greatness of virtue. THEOPHYLACT. For many are called great before men, but not before God, as the hypocrites. And so in like manner was John called great, as the parents of John were called just, *before the Lord.* AMBROSE. He extended not the boundaries of an empire, nor brought back in triumph the spoils of war, (but, what is far greater,) preaching in the desert he overcame by his great virtue the delights of the world, and the lusts of the flesh. Hence it follows; *And he shall drink no wine nor strong drink.* BEDE. *Sicera* is interpreted "drunkenness," and by the word the Hebrews understand any drink that can intoxicate, (whether made from fruits, corn, or any other thing). But it was part of the law of the Nazarites to give
Numb. up wine and strong drink at the time of their consecration.
6, 5. Hence John, and others like him, that they might always remain Nazarites, (i.e. holy,) are careful always to abstain from

these things. For he ought not to be drunk with wine (in which is licentiousness) who desires to be filled with the new wine of the Holy Spirit; rightly then is he, from whom all drunkenness with wine is utterly put away, filled with the grace of the Spirit. But it follows, *And he shall be filled with the Holy Spirit.* AMBROSE. On whomsoever the Holy Spirit is poured, in him there is fulness of great virtue; as in St. John, who before he was born, when yet in his mother's womb, bore witness to the grace of the Spirit which he had received, when leaping in the womb of his parent he hailed the glad tidings of the coming of the Lord. There is one spirit of this life, another of grace. The former has its beginning at birth, its end at death; the latter is not tied down to times and seasons, is not quenched by death, is not shut out of the womb. GREEK EXPOSITOR. But what John's Metaphrastes sup.
work is to be, and what he will do through the Holy Spirit, is shewn as follows; *And many of the children of Israel shall he turn, &c.* ORIGEN. John indeed turned many, but it is the Lord's work to turn all to God their Father. BEDE. Now since John (who bearing witness to Christ, baptized the people in His faith) is said to have turned the children of Israel to the Lord their God, it is plain that Christ is the God of Israel. Let the Arians then cease to deny that Christ our Lord is God. Let the Photinians [c] blush to ascribe Christ's beginning to the Virgin. Let the Manichæans no longer believe that there is one God of the people of Israel, another of the Christians. AMBROSE. But we need no testimony that St. John turned the hearts of many, for to this point we have the express witness of both prophetic and evangelical Scriptures. For the voice of one crying in the wilderness, *Prepare ye the way of the Lord, and make His paths straight;* and his baptisms thronged by the people, declare the rapid progress of conversion. For the forerunner of Christ preached, not himself, but the Lord; and therefore it follows, *And he shall go before Him.* It was

[c] So called from Photinus, Bp. of Sirmio in the middle of the fourth century. He taught that Christ was Ψιλὸς ἄνθρωπος, and had His beginning from the Virgin Mary. His heresy was condemned in the Council of Antioch A. D. 344, and in those of Sardis and Milan 347, 348. He was finally deposed in the second Council of Sirmio 351, and banished. See Epiphan. Hæres. 71. tit. iii. tom. 1.

well said, that he shall go before Him, who both in birth and in death was His forerunner. ORIGEN. *In the spirit and power of Elijah.*—He says not, in the mind of Elijah, but *in the spirit and power.* For the spirit which was in Elijah came upon John, and in like manner his power. AMBROSE. For never is the spirit without power, nor power without the spirit. And therefore it is said, *in the spirit and power;* because holy Elijah had great power and grace. Power, so that he turned back the false hearts of the people to faith; power of abstinence, and patience, and the spirit of prophecy. Elijah was in the wilderness, in the wilderness also was John. The one sought not the favour of king Ahab; the other despised that of Herod. The one divided Jordan: the other brought men to the Saving waters; John, the forerunner of our Lord's first coming; Elijah of His latter.

Mal. 4, 5. 6. BEDE. But what was foretold of Elias by Malachi, is now spoken by the Angel of John; as it follows, *That he should turn the hearts of the parents to the children;* pouring into the minds of the people, by his preaching, the spiritual knowledge of the ancient saints. *And the disobedient to the wisdom of the just;* i. e. not laying claim to righteousness
Rom. 10. sup. from the works of the law, but seeking salvation by faith. GREEK EX. Or else; the Jews were the parents of John and the Apostles; but, nevertheless, from pride and infidelity raged violently against the Gospel. Therefore, like dutiful children, John first, and the Apostles after him, declared to them the truth, winning them over to their own righteousness and wisdom. So also will Elias convert the remnant of Hebrews to the truth of the Apostles.

BEDE. But because he had said that Zacharias' prayer for the people was heard, he adds, *To make ready a people prepared*[1] *for the Lord;* by which he teaches in what manner the same people must be healed and prepared; namely, by repenting at the preaching of John and believing on Christ. THEOPHYL. Or, John made ready a people not disbelieving but prepared, that is, previously fitted to receive Christ.

ORIGEN. This sacrament[2] of preparation is even now fulfilled in the world, for even now the spirit and power of John must come upon the soul, before it believes in Jesus Christ.

[1] perfectam

[2] sacramentum

18. And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years.

19. And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings.

20. And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season.

21. And the people waited for Zacharias, and marvelled that he tarried so long in the temple.

22. And when he came out, he could not speak unto them: and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple: for he beckoned unto them, and remained speechless.

CHRYSOSTOM. Considering his own age, and moreover the barrenness of his wife, Zacharias doubted; as it is said, *And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this?* as if he said, "How shall this be?" And he adds the reason of his doubting; *For I am an old man.* An unseasonable time of life, an ill-suited nature; the planter infirm, the soil barren. But it is thought by some a thing unpardonable in the priest, that he raises a course of objections; for whenever God declares any thing, it becomes us to receive it in faith, and moreover, disputes of this kind are the mark of a rebellious spirit. Hence it follows; *And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, who stand before God.* BEDE. As if he says, "If it were man who promised these miracles, one might with impunity demand a sign, but when an angel promises, it is then not right to doubt." It follows; *And I am sent to speak to thee.* CHRYS. That when you hear that I am sent from God, you should deem none of the things which are said unto thee to be of man, for I speak not of myself, but declare the message of Him who sends me. And this is the merit and excellence of a messenger, to relate

Chrys. Hom. ii. De Inc. Nat. Dei sup.

Chrys. sup.

nothing of his own. BEDE. Here we must remark, that the Angel testifies that he both stands before God, and is sent to bring good tidings to Zacharias. GREG. For when angels come to us, they so outwardly fulfil their ministry, as at the same time inwardly to be never absent from His sight; since, though the angelic spirit is circumscribed, the highest Spirit, which is God, is not circumscribed. The angels, therefore, even when sent are before Him, because on whatever mission they go, they pass within Him.

Greg. Hom. xxxiv. in Evang.

BEDE. But he gives him the sign which he asks for, that he who spoke in unbelief, might now by silence learn to believe; as it follows; *and, behold, thou shalt be dumb.* CHRYS. That the bonds might be transferred from the powers of generation to the vocal organs. From no regard to the priesthood was he spared, but for this reason was the more smitten, because in a matter of faith he ought to have set an example to others. THEOPHYL. Because the word in the Greek may also signify *deaf,* he well says, *Because thou believest not, thou shalt be deaf, and shalt not be able to speak.* For most reasonably he suffered these two things; as disobedient, he incurs the penalty of deafness; as an objector, of silence. CHRYS. But the Angel says, *And, behold;* in other words, "At this instant." But mark the mercy of God in what follows: *Until the day in which these things shall be performed.* As if he said, "When by the issues of events I shall have proved my words, and thou shalt perceive that thou art rightly punished, I will remove the punishment from thee." And he points out the cause of the punishment, adding, *Because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season;* not considering His power who sent me, and before whom I stand. But if he who was incredulous about a mortal birth *is punished,* how shall he escape vengeance, who speaks falsely of the heavenly and unspeakable birth?

Chrys. sup.

cap. i. κωφὸς

Chrys. sup.

GREEK EX. Now while these things were going on within, the delay excited surprise among the multitudes who were waiting without, as it follows: *And the people waited for Zacharias, and marvelled that he tarried.* And while various suspicions were going about, each man repeating them as it pleased him, Zacharias coming forth told by his silence

Antipater Bostrensis.

what he secretly endured. Hence it follows, *And when he came out, he could not speak.* THEOPHYL. But Zacharias beckoned to the people, who perhaps enquired the cause of his silence, which, as he was not able to speak, he signified to them by nodding. Hence it follows, *And he beckoned to them, and remained speechless.* AMBROSE. But a nod is a certain action of the body, without speech endeavouring to declare the will, yet not expressing it.

23. And it came to pass, that, as soon as the days of his ministration were accomplished, he departed to his own house.

24. And after those days his wife Elisabeth conceived, and hid herself five months, saying,

25. Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein He looked on me, to take away my reproach among men.

BEDE. During the time of their course, the priests of the temple were so occupied by their office, that they kept themselves not only from the society of their wives, but even from the very threshold of their houses. Hence it is said, *And it came to pass, that, as soon as the days were accomplished, &c.* For as there was then required a priestly succession from the root of Aaron, of necessity then a time was appointed for keeping up the inheritance. But as now not a carnal succession, but spiritual perfection, is looked for, the priests are enjoined (in order that they might ever be able to serve the altar) the perpetual observance of chastity. It follows: *But after those days, &c.* that is, after the days of Zacharias's ministration were completed. But these things were done in the month of September, the twenty-second day of the month, upon which the Jews were bound to observe the feast of the Tabernacles, just before the equinox, at which the night began to be longer than the day, because Christ must increase, but John must decrease. And those days of fasting were not without their meaning; for by the mouth of John, repentance and mortification were to be

see John 3, 30.

preached to men. It follows: *And she hid herself.* AMBROSE. What reason then for concealment, except shame? For there are certain allowed times in wedlock, when it is becoming to attend to the begetting of children; while the years thrive, while there is hope of child-bearing. But when in good time old age has come on, and the period of life is more fitted for governing children, than begetting them, it is a shame to bear about the signs of pregnancy, however lawful. It is a shame to be laden with the burden of another age, and for the womb to swell with the fruit of not one's own time of life. It was a shame then to her on account of her age; and hence we may understand the reason why they did not at this time come together, for surely she who blushed not at their coming together in their old age, would not blush at her child-bearing; and yet she blushes at the parental burden, while she yet is unconscious of the religious mystery. But she who hid herself because she had conceived a son, began to glory that she carried in her womb a prophet.

ORIGEN. And therefore he says, *Five months,* that is, until Mary should conceive, and her babe leaping with joy should prophesy. AMBROSE. And though she might blush at the time of her child-bearing, on the other hand, she rejoiced that she was free from reproach, saying, *Thus hath the Lord dealt with me.*

Chrys. CHRYS. Truly He has loosed her barrenness, a supernatural gift He has bestowed upon her, and the unfruitful rock has produced the green blade. He has taken away her disgrace, in that He has made her to bring forth. Hence it follows: *In the days wherein He looked on me, to take away my reproach among men.* AMBROSE. For it is a shame among women not to receive that reward of marriage, which is the only cause of their being married. CHRYS. Her joy therefore is twofold. The Lord has taken away from her the mark of barrenness, and also given her an illustrious offspring. In the case of other births, the coming together of the parents only occurs; this birth was the effect of heavenly grace.

Chrys. Homil. de Anna.

BEDE. Now mystically by Zacharias may be signified the Jewish Priesthood, by Elisabeth the law itself; which,

well administered by the teaching of the Priests, ought to have borne spiritual children to God, but was not able, *because the Law made no one perfect.* Both were just, because the law is good, and the Priesthood for that time holy; both were well stricken in years, because at Christ's coming both the Law and Priesthood were just bending to old age. Zacharias enters the temple, because it is the priest's office to enter into the sanctuary of heavenly mysteries. There was a multitude without the doors, because the multitude cannot penetrate mysteries. When he places frankincense on the altar, he discovers that John will be born; for while the teachers are kindled with the flame of divine reading, they find the grace of God flow to them through Jesus: and this is done by an angel, *for the Law was ordained by angels.* AMBROSE. But in one man the voice of the people was put to silence, because in one man the whole people was addressing God. For the word of God has come over to us, and in us is not silent. He is dumb who understands not the Law; for why should you think the man who knows not a sound, to be more dumb than him who knows not a mystery. The Jewish people are like to one beckoning, who cannot make his actions intelligible. BEDE. And yet Elisabeth conceives John, because the more inward parts of the Law abound with sacraments of Christ. She conceals her conception five months, because Moses in five books set forth the mysteries of Christ; or because the dispensation of Christ is represented by the words or deeds of the saints, in the five ages of the world.

Heb. 7, 19. 1 Tim. 1, 8.

Gal. 3, 19.

26. And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth,

27. To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

BEDE. Because either the Incarnation of Christ was to be in the sixth age of the world, or because it was to serve to the

fulfilling of the law, rightly in the sixth month of John's conception was an angel sent to Mary, to tell her that a Saviour should be born. Hence it is said, *And in the sixth month, &c.* We must understand the sixth month to be March, on the twenty-fifth day of which our Lord is reported to have been conceived, and to have suffered, as also to have been born on the twenty-fifth day of December. But if either the one day we believe to be the vernal equinox, or the other the winter solstice, it happens that with the increase of light He was conceived or born who lighteneth every man that cometh into the world. But if any one shall prove, that before the time of our Lord's nativity or conception, light began either to increase, or supersede the darkness, we then say, that it was because John, before the appearance of His coming, began to preach the kingdom of heaven.

Basil. in Esai. 6. BASIL. The heavenly spirits visit us, not as it seems fit to them, but as the occasion conduces to our advantage, for they are ever looking upon the glory and fulness of the Divine Wisdom; hence it follows, *The angel Gabriel was sent.*
Greg. Hom. 34, in Evan. GREG. To the Virgin Mary was sent, not any one of the angels, but the archangel Gabriel; for upon this service it was meet that the highest angel should come, as being the bearer of the highest of all tidings. He is therefore marked by a particular name, to signify what was his effectual part in the work. For Gabriel is interpreted, "the strength of God." By the strength of God then was He to be announced who was coming as the God of strength, and mighty in battle, to put down the powers of the air. Gloss. interlin. GLOSS. But the place is also added whither he is sent, as it follows, *To a city, Nazareth.* For it was told that He would come a Nazarite, (i.e. the holy of the holy.)

Beda in Homil. de fest. Annunt. BEDE. It was a fit beginning for man's restoration, that an angel should be sent down from God to consecrate a virgin by a divine birth, for the first cause of man's perdition was the Devil sending a serpent to deceive a woman by the spirit of pride. Aug. de san. Virg. cap. xv. AUG. *To a virgin,* for Christ could be born from virginity alone, seeing He could not have an equal in His birth. It was necessary for our Head by this mighty miracle to be born according to the flesh of a virgin, that He might signify that His members were to

be born in the spirit of a virgin Church. PSEUDO-JEROME. Hieron.
And rightly an angel is sent to the Virgin, because the vol. xi. 92. De As-
virgin state is ever akin to that of angels. Surely in the sumpt.
flesh to live beyond the flesh is not a life on earth but in heaven.

CHRYS. The Angel announces the birth to the Virgin not Chrys.
after the conception, lest she should be thereby too much sup. Matt.
troubled, but before the conception he addresses her, not in Hom. 4.
a dream, but standing by her in visible shape. For as great indeed were the tidings she receives, she needed before the issue of the event an extraordinary visible manifestation.

AMBROSE. Scripture has rightly mentioned that she was *espoused*, as well as a virgin; a *virgin*, that she might appear free from all connexion with man; *espoused*, that she might not be branded with the disgrace of sullied virginity, whose swelling womb seemed to bear evident marks of her corruption. But the Lord had rather that men should cast a doubt upon His birth than upon His mother's purity. He knew how tender is a virgin's modesty, and how easily assailed the reputation of her chastity, nor did He think the credit of His birth was to be built up by His mother's wrongs. It follows therefore, that the holy Mary's virginity was of as untainted purity as it was also of unblemished reputation. Nor ought there, by an erroneous opinion, to be left the shadow of an excuse to living virgins, that the mother of our Lord even seemed to be evil spoken of. But what could be imputed to the Jews, or to Herod, if they should seem to have persecuted an adulterous offspring?
And how could He Himself say, *I came not to abolish the* Matt. 5,
law, but to fulfil it, if He should seem to have had His 18.
beginning from a violation of the law, for the issue of an Dent.
unmarried person is condemned by the law? Not to 23, 17.
add that also greater credit is given to the words of Mary, and the cause of falsehood removed? For it might seem that unmarried becoming pregnant, she had wished to shade her guilt by a lie; but an espoused person has no reason for lying, since to women child-birth is the reward of wedlock, the grace of the marriage bed. Again, the virginity of Mary was meant to baffle the prince of the world, who, when he perceived her espoused to a man, could cast no suspicion

on her offspring. ORIGEN. For if she had had no husband, soon would the thought have stolen into the Devil's mind, how she who had known no man could be pregnant. It was right that the conception should be Divine, something more exalted than human nature. AMBROSE. But still more has it baffled the princes of the world, for the malice of devils soon detects even hidden things, while they who are occupied in worldly vanities, cannot know the things of God. But moreover, a more powerful witness of her purity is adduced, her husband, who might both have been indignant at the injury, and revenged the dishonour, if he also had not acknowledged the mystery; of whom it is added, *Whose name was Joseph, of the house of David.* BEDE. Which last applies not only to Joseph, but also to Mary, for the Law commanded that every one should take a wife out of his own tribe or family. It follows, *And the virgin's name was Mary.* ID. Maria, in Hebrew, is the star of the sea; but in Syriac it is interpreted Mistress, and well, because Mary was thought worthy to be the mother of the Lord of the whole world, and the light of endless ages.

Beda in Homil. de Annunt. sup.

28. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.

29. And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.

AMBROSE. Mark the Virgin by her manner of life. Alone in an inner chamber, unseen by the eyes of men, discovered only by an angel; as it is said, *And the angel came in unto her.* That she might not be dishonoured by any ignoble address, she is saluted by an angel. GREG. NYSS. Far different then to the news formerly addressed to the woman, is the announcement now made to the Virgin. In the former, the cause of sin was punished by the pains of childbirth; in the latter, through gladness, sorrow is driven away. Hence the Angel not unaptly proclaims joy to the Virgin, saying, *Hail.* GREEK EX. But that she was judged worthy of the

Diem Nat. Orat. in Christi.

Geometer.

nuptials is attested by his saying, *Full of grace.* For it is signified as a kind of token or marriage-gift of the bridegroom, that she was fruitful in graces. For of the things which he mentions, the one appertains to the bride, the other to the bridegroom. PSEUDO-JEROME. And it is well said, *Full of grace,* for to others, grace comes in part; into Mary at once the fulness of grace wholly infused itself. She truly is full of grace through whom has been poured forth upon every creature the abundant rain of the Holy Spirit. But already He was with the Virgin who sent the angel to the Virgin. The Lord preceded His messenger, for He could not be confined by place who dwells in all places. Whence it follows, *The Lord is with thee.* PSEUDO-AUG. More than with me, for He Himself is in thy heart, He is (made) in thy womb, He fills thy soul, He fills thy womb.

Jerome sup.

Aug. in Serm. de Annunt. iii. app. 195.

GREEK EX. But this is the sum of the whole message. The Word of God, as the Bridegroom, effecting an incomprehensible union, Himself, as it were, the same both planting, and being planted, hath moulded the whole nature of man into Himself. But comes last the most perfect and comprehensive salutation; *Blessed art thou among women;* i. e. alone, far before all other women; that women also should be blessed in thee, as men are in thy Son; but rather both in both. For as by one man and one woman came at once both sin and sorrow, so now also by one woman and one man hath both blessing and joy been restored, and poured forth upon all.

Geometer.

AMBROSE. But mark the Virgin by her bashfulness, for she was afraid, as it follows; *And when she heard, she was troubled.* It is the habit of virgins to tremble, and to be ever afraid at the presence of man, and to be shy when he addresses her. Learn, O virgin, to avoid light talking. Mary feared even the salutation of an angel. GREEK EX. But as she might be accustomed to these visions, the Evangelist ascribes her agitation not to the vision, but to the things told her, saying, *she was troubled at his words.* Now observe both the modesty and wisdom of the Virgin; the soul, and at the same time the voice. When she heard the joyful words, she pondered them in her mind, and neither openly resisted through unbelief, nor forthwith lightly com-

sup.

plied; avoiding equally the inconstancy of Eve, and the insensibility of Zacharias. Hence it is said, *And she cast in her mind what manner of salutation this was,* it is not said conception, for as yet she knew not the vastness of the mystery. But the salutation, was their aught of passion in it as from a man to a virgin? or was it not of God, seeing that he makes mention of God, saying, *The Lord is with thee.* AMBROSE. She wondered also at the new form of blessing, unheard of before, reserved for Mary alone. ORIGEN. For if Mary had known that similar words had been addressed to others, such a salutation would never have appeared to her so strange and alarming.

30. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary; for thou hast found favour with God.

31. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name JESUS.

32. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David:

33. And He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end.

When the angel saw that she was troubled at this unusual salutation, calling her by her name as if she was well known to him, he tells her she must not fear, as it follows; *And the*
Photius. *angel said, Fear not, Mary.* GREEK EX. As if he said, I came not to deceive you, nay rather to bring down deliverance from deception; I came not to rob you of your inviolable virginity, but to open a dwelling-place for the Author and Guardian of thy purity; I am not a servant of the Devil, but the ambassador of Him that destroyeth the Devil. I am come to form a marriage treaty, not to devise plots. So far then was he from allowing her to be harassed by distracting thoughts, lest he should be counted a servant unfaithful to his trust. CHRYS. But he who earns favour in the sight of God has nothing to fear. Hence it follows, *For thou hast*

found favour before God. But how shall any one find it, except through the means of his humility? *For God giveth grace to the humble.* GREEK EX. For the Virgin found favour with God, in that decking her own soul in the bright robes of chastity, she prepared a dwelling-place pleasing to God. Not only did she retain her virginity inviolate, but her conscience also she kept from stain. As many had found favour before Mary, he goes on to state what was peculiar to her. *Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb.* GREEK EX. By the word *behold,* he denotes rapidity and actual presence, implying that with the utterance of the word the conception is accomplished. GREEK EX. *Thou shalt conceive in thy womb,* that he might shew that our Lord from the very Virgin's womb, and of our substance, took our flesh upon Him. For the Divine Word came to purify man's nature and birth, and the first elements of our generation. And so without sin and human seed, passing through every stage as we do, He is conceived in the flesh, and carried in the womb for the space of nine months. GREEK EX. But since it happens also that to the spiritual mind is given in an especial manner to conceive the Divine Spirit, and bring forth the spirit of salvation, as says the Prophet; therefore he added, *And thou shalt bring forth a Son.* AMBROSE. But all are not as Mary, that when they conceive the word of the Holy Spirit, they bring forth; for some put forth the word prematurely, others have Christ in the womb, but not yet formed.

James 4, 6. 1 Pet. 5, 5. ubi sup.

Geometer.

Sev. Antiochenus.

Geometer.

Is. 26, 18.

GREG. NYSS. While the expectation of child-birth strikes a woman with terror, the sweet mention of her offspring calms her, as it is added, *And thou shalt call His name Jesus.* The coming of the Saviour is the banishing of all fear. BEDE. Jesus is interpreted Saviour, or Healing. GREEK EX. And he says, *Thou shalt call,* not His father shall call, for He is without a father as regards His lower birth, as He is without a mother in respect of the higher. CYRIL. But this name was given anew to the Word in adaptation to His nativity in the flesh; as that prophecy saith, *Thou shalt be called by a new name which the mouth of the Lord hath named.* GREEK EX. But as this name was common to Him with the successor of Moses, the angel therefore implying that He should not be after Joshua's likeness, adds, *He shall*

Greg. Orat. in Diem Nat.

Geom. sup.

de fide ad Theod.

Is. 62, 2.

sup.

Josh. 1.

be great. AMBROSE. It was said also of John, that *he shall be great*, but of him indeed as of a great man, of Christ, as of the great God. For abundantly is poured forth the power of God; widely the greatness of the heavenly substance extended, neither confined by place, nor grasped by thought; neither determined by calculation, nor altered by age. ORIGEN. See then the greatness of the Saviour, how it is diffused over the whole world. Go up to heaven, see there how it has filled the heavenly places; carry thy thoughts down to the deep, behold, there too He has descended. If thou seest this, then, in like manner, beholdest thou fulfilled in very deed, *He shall be great.*

Photius. GREEK EX. The assumption of our flesh does not diminish aught from the loftiness of the Deity, but rather exalts the lowness of man's nature. Hence it follows, *And He shall be called the Son of the Highest.* Not, Thou shalt give Him the name, but He Himself shall be called. By whom, but His Father of like substance with Himself? For no one hath known the Son but the Father. (Matt. 11, 27) But He in whom exists the infallible knowledge of His Son, is the true interpreter as to the name which should be given Him, when He says, *This is My beloved Son;* (Matt. 17, 5.) for such indeed from everlasting He is, though His name was not revealed till now; therefore he says, *He shall be called*, not shall be made or begotten. For before the worlds He was of like substance with the Father. Him therefore thou shalt conceive; His mother thou shalt become; Him shall thy virgin shrine enclose, whom the heavens were not able to contain. (Chrys. non occ.) CHRYS. But since it seems shocking or unworthy to some men that God should inhabit a body, is the Sun, I would ask, the heat whereof is felt by each body that receives its rays, at all sullied as to its natural purity? Much more then does the Sun of righteousness, in taking upon Himself a most pure body from the Virgin's womb, escape not only defilement, but even shew forth His own mother in greater holiness. (Severus Antiochenus.) GREEK EX. And to make the Virgin mindful of the prophets, he adds, *And the Lord God shall give unto Him the seat of David*, that she might know clearly, that He who is to be born of her is that very Christ, whom the prophets promised should be born of the seed of David.

CYRIL. Not, however, from Joseph proceeded the most pure descent of Christ. For from one and the same line of connexion had sprung both Joseph and the Virgin, and from this the only-begotten had taken the form of man. BASIL. Our Lord sat not on the earthly throne of David, the Jewish kingdom having been transferred to Herod. *The seat of David* is that on which our Lord re-established His spiritual kingdom which should never be destroyed. Hence it follows, *And He shall reign over the house of Jacob.* CHRYS. Now He assigns to the present house of Jacob all those who were of the number of the Jews that believed on Him. For as Paul says, *They are not all Israel which are of Israel, but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.* BEDE. Or by the house of Jacob he means the whole Church, which either sprang from a good root, or though formerly a wild olive branch, has yet been for a reward of its faith grafted into the good olive tree. GREEK EX. But to reign for ever is of none save God alone; and hence though because of the incarnation Christ is said to receive the seat of David, yet as being Himself God He is acknowledged to be the eternal King. It follows, *And His kingdom shall have no end,* not in that He is God, but in that He is man also. Now indeed He has the kingdom of many nations, but finally He shall reign over all, when all things shall be put under Him. BEDE. Let Nestorius then cease to say that the Virgin's Son is only man, and to deny that He is taken up by the Word of God into the unity of the Person. For the Angel when he says that the very same has David for His father whom he declares is called the Son of the Highest, demonstrates the one Person of Christ in two natures. The Angel uses the future tense not because, as the Heretics say, *Christ was not before Mary,* but because in the same person, man with God shares the same name of Son.

Cyril. contra Julian lib. viii. Basil. Epist. 236. ad Amphil. Chrys. Hom. vii. in Matt. Rom. 9, 6. 8. Rom. 11, 27. Geometer. 1 Cor. 15, 25. vocabitur, regnabit.

34. Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?

35. And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also

that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

AMBROSE. It was Mary's part neither to refuse belief in the Angel, nor too hastily take unto herself the divine message. How subdued her answer is, compared with the words of the Priest. *Then said Mary to the Angel, How shall this be?* She says, *How shall this be?* He answers, *Whereby shall I know this?* He refuses to believe that which he says he does not know, and seeks as it were still further authority for belief. She avows herself willing to do that which she doubts not will be done, but how, she is anxious to know. Mary had read, *Behold, she shall conceive and bear a son.* She believed therefore that it should be, but how it was to take place she had never read, for even to so great a prophet this had not been revealed. So great a mystery was not to be divulged by the mouth of man, but of an angel.

Is. 7, 14.

Orat. in Diem Nat. Christi.

GREG. NYSS. Hear the chaste words of the Virgin. The Angel tells her she shall bear a son, but she rests upon her virginity, deeming her inviolability a more precious thing than the Angel's declaration. Hence she says, *Seeing that I know not a man.* BASIL. Knowledge is spoken of in various ways. The wisdom of our Creator is called knowledge, and an acquaintance with His mighty works, the keeping also of His commandments, and the constant drawing near to Him; and besides these the marriage union is called knowledge, as it is here.

Basil. 235. Ep. Amph.

Greg. sup.

GREG. NYSS. These words of Mary are a token of what she was pondering in the secrets of her heart; for if for the sake of the marriage union she had wished to be espoused to Joseph, why was she seized with astonishment when the conception was made known unto her? seeing in truth she might herself be expecting at the time to become a mother according to the law of nature. But because it was meet that her body being presented to God as an holy offering should be kept inviolate, therefore she says, *Seeing that I know not a man.* As if she said, Notwithstanding that thou who speakest art an Angel, yet that I should know a man is

plainly an impossible thing. How then can I be a mother, having no husband? For Joseph I have acknowledged as my betrothed. GREEK EX. But mark, how the Angel solves the Virgin's doubts, and shews to her the unstained marriage and the unspeakable birth. *And the Angel answered, and said unto her, The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee.* CHRYS. As if he said, Look not for the order of nature in things which transcend and overpower nature. Dost thou say, *How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?* Nay rather, shall it happen to thee for this very reason, that thou hast never known a husband. For if thou hadst, thou wouldest not have been thought worthy of the mystery, not that marriage is unholy, but virginity more excellent. It became the common Lord of all both to take part with us, and to differ with us in His nativity; for the being born from the womb, He shared in common with us, but in that He was born without cohabitation, He was exalted far above us. GREG. NYSS. O blessed is that womb which because of the overflowing purity of the Virgin Mary has drawn to itself the gift of life! For in others scarcely indeed shall a pure soul obtain the presence of the Holy Spirit, but in her the flesh is made the receptacle of the Spirit. ID. For the tables of our nature which guilt had broken, the true Lawgiver has formed anew to Himself from our dust without cohabitation, creating a body capable of taking His divinity, which the finger of God hath carved, that is to say, the Spirit coming upon the Virgin. ID. Moreover, *the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee.* Christ is the power of the most high King, who by the coming of the Holy Spirit is formed in the Virgin. GREG. By the term *overshadowing,* both natures of the Incarnate God are signified. For shadow is formed by light and matter. But the Lord by His Divine nature is light. Because then immaterial light was to be embodied in the Virgin's womb, it is well said unto her, *The power of the Highest shall overshadow thee,* that is, the human body in thee shall receive an immaterial light of divinity. For this is said to Mary for the heavenly refreshing of her soul. BEDE. Thou shalt conceive then not by the seed of man whom thou knowest not, but by the operation of the Holy

Geometer.

Chrys. Hom. 49 in Gen.

Greg. Orat. in Diem Nat.

Greg. Lib. de Vita Moysis.

Greg. in Diem Natal.

Greg. 18 Moral c. 20. super Job. 27, 21.

Spirit with which thou art filled. There shall be no flame of desire in thee when the Holy Spirit shall overshadow thee. GREG. NYSS. Or he says, *overshadow thee,* because as a shadow takes its shape from the character of those bodies which go before it, so the signs of the Son's Deity will appear from the power of the Father. For as in us a certain life-giving power is seen in the material substance, by which man is formed; so in the Virgin, has the power of the Highest in like manner, by *the life-giving Spirit,* taken from the Virgin's body a fleshly substance inherent in the body to form a new man. Hence it follows, *Therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee.* ATHAN. For we confess that which then was taken up from Mary to be of the nature of man and a most real body, the very same also according to nature with our own body. For Mary is our sister, seeing we have all descended from Adam. BASIL. Hence also, St. Paul says, *God sent forth His Son, born* not (by a woman) but *of a woman.* For the words by a woman might convey only a mere passing expression of birth, but when it is said, *of a woman,* there is openly declared a communion of nature between the son and the parent. GREG. To distinguish His holiness from ours, Jesus is stated in an especial manner to be born holy. For we although indeed made holy, are not born so, for we are constrained by the very condition of our corruptible nature to cry out with the Prophet, *Behold, I was conceived in iniquity.* But He alone is in truth holy, who was not conceived by the cementing of a fleshly union, nor as the heretics rave, one person in His human nature, another in His divine; not conceived and brought forth a mere man, and afterwards by His merits, obtained that He should be God, but the Angel announcing and the Spirit coming, first the Word in the womb, afterwards within the womb the Word made flesh. Whence it follows, *Shall be called the Son of God.* GREEK EX. But observe, how the Angel has declared the whole Trinity to the Virgin, making mention of the Holy Spirit, the Power, and the Most High, for the Trinity is indivisible[c].

Greg. Orat. in Diem Nat.

non occ. in Greg. Nyss.

Athan. Ep. ad Epictetum.

Basil. Lib. de Spirit. Sanct. c. v.

Gal. 4, 4.

Greg. 18 Moral. c. 52, super Job 28, 19.

Ps. 51, 5.

Victor Presbyter.

[c] This passage, except the words "For the Trinity is indivisible," is to be found both in Tit. Bost. and Theophylact.

36. And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren.

37. For with God nothing shall be impossible.

38. And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.

CHRYS. Seeing that his previous words had overcome the mind of the Virgin, the Angel drops his discourse to a humbler subject, persuading her by reference to sensible things. Hence he says, *And, behold, Elisabeth thy cousin, &c.* Mark the discretion of Gabriel; he did not remind her of Sarah, or Rebecca, or Rachel, because they were examples of ancient times, but he brings forward a recent event, that he might the more forcibly strike her mind. For this reason also he noticed the age, saying, *She also hath conceived a son in her old age;* and the natural infirmity also. As it follows, *And this is the sixth month with her who was called barren.* For not immediately at the beginning of Elisabeth's conception did he make this announcement, but after the space of six months, that the swelling of her womb might confirm its truth. GREG. NAZ. But some one will ask, How is Christ related to David, since Mary sprang from the blood of Aaron, the Angel having declared Elisabeth to be her kinswoman? But this was brought about by the Divine counsel, to the end that the royal race might be united to the priestly stock; that Christ, who is both King and Priest, might be descended from both according to the flesh. For it is written, that Aaron, the first High Priest according to the law, took from the tribe of Judah for his wife Elisabeth, the daughter of Amminadab. And observe the most holy administration of the Spirit, in ordering that the wife of Zacharias should be called Elisabeth, so bringing us back to that Elisabeth whom Aaron married. BEDE. So it was then, lest the Virgin should despair of being able to bear a son, that she received the example of one both old and barren about to bring forth, in order that she might learn that all things are possible with God, even those which seem to be

Chrys. 49. in Gen.

Carm. 18. de Geneal. Christi.

Exod. 6. 23.

opposed to the order of nature. Whence it follows, *For there shall be no word impossible with God.* CHRYS. For the Lord of nature can do all things as He will, who executes and disposes all things, holding the reins of life and death. AUG. But whoever says, "If God is omnipotent, let Him cause those things which have been done to have not been done," does not perceive that he says, "Let Him cause those things which are true, in that very respect in which they are true to be false." For He may cause a thing not to be which was, as when He makes a man who began to be by birth, not to be by death. But who can say that He makes not to be that which no longer is in being? For whatever is past is no longer in being. But if aught can happen to a thing, that thing is still in being to which any thing happens, and if it is, how is it past? Therefore that is not in being which we have truly said has been, because the truth is, in our opinions, not in that thing which no longer is. But this opinion God cannot make false; and we do not so call God omnipotent as supposing also that He could die. He plainly is alone truly called omnipotent, who truly is, and by whom alone that is, whatever in any wise exists, whether spirit or body.

verbum

Aug. contra Faust. l. xxv. c. 5.

AMBROSE. Behold now the humility, the devotion of the Virgin. For it follows, *But Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord.* She calls herself His handmaid, who is chosen to be His mother, so far was she from being exalted by the sudden promise. At the same time also by calling herself handmaid, she claimed to herself in no other way the prerogative of such great grace than that she might do what was commanded her. For about to bring forth One meek and lowly, she was bound herself to shew forth lowliness. As it follows, *Be it unto me according to thy word.* You have her submission, you see her wish. *Behold the handmaid of the Lord,* signifies the readiness of duty. *Be it unto me according to thy word,* the conception of the wish. GREEK EX. Some men will highly extol one thing, some another, in these words of the Virgin. One man, for example, her constancy, another her willingness of obedience; one man her not being tempted by the great and glorious promises of the great archangel; another, her self-command in not giving an

Geometer.

instant assent, equally avoiding both the heedlessness of Eve and the disobedience of Zacharias. But to me the depth of her humility is an object no less worthy of admiration. GREG. Through an ineffable sacrament of a holy conception and a birth inviolable, agreeable to the truth of each nature, the same virgin was both the handmaid and mother of the Lord. Greg. sup.

BEDE. Having received the consent of the Virgin, the Angel soon returns heavenward, as it follows, *And the angel departed from her.* EUSEB. Not only having obtained what he wished, but wondering at her virgin beauty, and the ripeness of her virtue. vel Geometer.

39. And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Juda;

40. And entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth.

41. And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost:

42. And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.

43. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

44. For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy.

45. And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord.

AMBROSE. The Angel, when he announced the hidden mysteries to the Virgin, that he might build up her faith by an example, related to her the conception of a barren woman. When Mary heard it, it was not that she disbelieved the oracle, or was uncertain about the messenger, or doubtful of the example, but rejoicing in the fulfilment of her wish, and

conscientious in the observance of her duty, she gladly went
plena Deo forth into the hill country. For what could Mary now, filled with God, but ascend into the higher parts with haste! ORIGEN. For Jesus who was in her womb hastened to sanctify John, still in the womb of his mother. Whence it follows, *with haste.* AMBROSE. The grace of the Holy Spirit knows not of slow workings. Learn, ye virgins, not to loiter in the streets, nor mix in public talk. THEOPHYL. She went into the mountains, because Zacharias dwelt there. As it follows, *To a city of Juda, and entered into the house of Zacharias.* Learn, O holy women, the attention which ye ought to shew for your kinswomen with child. For Mary, who before dwelt alone in the secret of her chamber, neither virgin modesty caused to shrink from the public gaze, nor the rugged mountains from pursuing her purpose, nor the tediousness of the journey from performing her duty. Learn also, O virgins, the lowliness of Mary. She came a kinswoman to her next of kin, the younger to the elder, nor did she merely come to her, but was the first to give her salutations; as it follows, *And she saluted Elisabeth.* For the more chaste a virgin is, the more humble she should be, and ready to give way to her elders. Let her then be the mistress of humility, in whom is the profession of chastity. Mary is also a cause of piety, in that the higher went to the lower, that the lower might be
Chrys. Hom. iv. in Matt. assisted, Mary to Elisabeth, Christ to John. CHRYS. Or else the Virgin kept to herself all those things which have been said, not revealing them to any one, for she did not believe that any credit would be given to her wonderful story; nay, she rather thought she would suffer reproach if she told it,
Geometer. as if wishing to screen her own guilt. GREEK EX. But to Elisabeth alone she has recourse, as she was wont to do from their relationship, and other close bonds of union. AMBROSE. But soon the blessed fruits of Mary's coming and our Lord's presence are made evident. For it follows, *And it came to pass, that when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb.* Mark the distinction and propriety of each word. Elisabeth first heard the word, but John first experienced the grace. She heard by the order of nature, he leaped by reason of the mystery. She perceived the coming of Mary, he the coming of the Lord.

GREEK EX. For the Prophet sees and hears more acutely than his mother, and salutes the chief of Prophets; but as he could not do this in words, he leaps in the womb, which was the greatest token of his joy. Who ever heard of leaping at a time previous to birth? Grace introduced things to which nature was a stranger. Shut up in the womb the soldier acknowledged his Lord and King soon to be born, the womb's covering being no obstacle to the mystical sight. ORIGEN. He was not filled with the Spirit, until she stood near him who bore Christ in her womb. Then indeed he was both filled with the Spirit, and leaping imparted the grace to his mother; as it follows, *And Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.* But we cannot doubt that she who was then filled with the Holy Spirit, was filled because of her son. AMBROSE. She who had hid herself because she conceived a son, began to glory that she carried in her womb a prophet, and she who had before blushed, now gives her blessing; as it follows, *And she spake out with a loud voice, Blessed art thou among women.* With a loud voice she exclaimed when she perceived the Lord's coming, for she believed it to be a holy birth. But she says, *Blessed art thou among women.* For none was ever partaker of such grace or could be, since of the one Divine seed, there is one only parent. BEDE. Mary is blessed by Elisabeth with the same words as before by Gabriel, to shew that she was to be reverenced both by men and angels. THEOPHYL. But because there have been other holy women who yet have borne sons stained with sin, she adds, *And blessed is the fruit of thy womb.* Or another interpretation is, having said, *Blessed art thou among women,* she then, as if some one enquired the cause, answers, *And blessed is the fruit of thy womb:* as it is said, *Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord. The Lord God, and He hath shewed us light;* for the Holy Scriptures often use *and,* instead of *because.*

Geometer.

vid. etiam Tit. Bos.

Ps. 118, 26. 27.

TIT. BOS. Now she rightly calls the Lord the fruit of the Virgin's womb, because He proceeded not from man, but from Mary alone. For they who are sown by their fathers are the fruits of their fathers. GREEK EX. This fruit alone then is blessed, because it is produced without man, and without sin. BEDE. This is the fruit which is promised to David, *Of the*

Geometer.

Ps. 132, 11.

Severus. *fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne.* GREEK Ex. From this place we derive the refutation of Eutyches, in that Christ is stated to be the fruit of the womb. For all fruit is of the same nature with the tree that bears it. It remains then that the Virgin was also of the same nature with the second Adam, who takes away the sins of the world. But let those also who invent curious fictions concerning the flesh of Christ, blush when they hear of the real child-bearing of the mother of God. For the fruit itself proceeds from the very substance of the tree. Where too are those who say that Christ passed through the Virgin as water through an aqueduct? Let these consider the words of Elisabeth who was filled with the Spirit, that Christ was *the fruit of the womb.* It follows, *And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?* AMBROSE. She says it not ignorantly, for she knew it was by the grace and operation of the Holy Spirit that the mother of the prophet should be saluted by the mother of his Lord, to the advancement and growth of her own pledge; but being aware that this was of no human deserving, but a gift of Divine grace, she therefore says, *Whence is this to me,* that is, By what right of mine, by what that I have done, for what good deeds? ORIGEN. Now in saying this, she coincides with her son. For John also felt that he was unworthy of our Lord's coming to him. But she gives the name of "the mother of our Lord" to one still a virgin, thus forestalling the event by the words of prophecy. Divine foreknowledge brought Mary to Elisabeth, that the testimony of John might reach the Lord. For from that time Christ ordained John to be a prophet. Hence it follows, *For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded, &c.* AUG. But in order to say this, as the Evangelist has premised, she was filled with the Holy Spirit, by whose revelation undoubtedly she knew what that leaping of the child meant; namely, that the mother of Him had come unto her, whose forerunner and herald that child was to be. Such then might be the meaning of so great an event; to be known indeed by grown up persons, but not understood by a little child; for she said not, "The babe leaped in faith in my womb," but *leaped for joy.* Now we see not only children leaping for joy, but even the cattle; not surely from any

non occ. vide Theoph. et Tit. Bost.

Aug. Epist. ad Dardanum 57.

faith or religious feeling, or any rational knowledge. But this joy was strange and unwonted, for it was in the womb; and at the coming of her who was to bring forth the Saviour of the world. This joy, therefore, and as it were reciprocal salutation to the mother of the Lord, was caused (as miracles are) by Divine influences in the child, not in any human way by him. For even supposing the exercise of reason and the will had been so far advanced in that child, as that he should be able in the bowels of his mother to know, believe, and assent; yet surely that must be placed among the miracles of Divine power, not referred to human examples.

THEOPHYL. The mother of our Lord had come to see Elisabeth, as also the miraculous conception from which the Angel had told her should result the belief of a far greater conception, to happen to herself; and to this belief the words of Elisabeth refer, *And blessed art thou who hast believed, for there shall be a performance of those things which were told thee from the Lord.* AMBROSE. You see that Mary doubted not but believed, and therefore the fruit of faith followed.

BEDE. Nor is it to be wondered at, that our Lord, about to redeem the world, commenced His mighty works with His mother, that she, through whom the salvation of all men was prepared, should herself be the first to reap the fruit of salvation from her pledge. AMBROSE. But happy are ye also who have heard and believed, for whatever soul hath believed, both conceives and brings forth the word of God, and knows His works. BEDE. But every soul which has conceived the word of God in the heart, straightway climbs the lofty summits of the virtues by the stairs of love, so as to be able to enter into the city of Juda, (into the citadel of prayer and praise, and abide as it were for three months in it,) to the perfection of faith, hope, and charity. GREG. She was touched with the spirit of prophecy at once, both as to the past, present, and future. She knew that Mary had believed the promises of the Angel; she perceived when she gave her the name of mother, that Mary was carrying in her womb the Redeemer of mankind; and when she foretold that all things would be accomplished, she saw also what was to follow in the future.

Greg. super Ezech. lib. i. Hom. i. 8.

46. And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord.

AMBROSE. As evil came into the world by a woman, so also is good introduced by women; and so it seems not without meaning, that both Elisabeth prophesies before John, and Mary before the birth of the Lord. But it follows, that as Mary was the greater person, so she uttered the fuller prophecy. BASIL. For the Virgin with lofty thoughts and deep penetration, contemplates the boundless mystery, the further she advances, magnifying God; *And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord.* GREEK EX. As if she said, Marvellous things hath the Lord declared that He will accomplish in my body, but neither shall my soul be unfruitful before God. It becomes me to offer Him the fruit also of my will, for inasmuch as I am obedient to a mighty miracle, am I bound to glorify Him who performs his mighty works in me. ORIGEN. Now if the Lord could neither receive increase or decrease, what is this that Mary speaks of, *My soul doth magnify the Lord?* But if I consider that the Lord our Saviour is the image of the invisible God, and that the soul is created according to His image, so as to be an image of an image, then I shall see plainly, that as after the manner of those who are accustomed to paint images, each one of us forming his soul after the image of Christ, makes it great or little, base or noble, after the likeness of the original; so when I have made my soul great in thought, word, and deed, the image of God is made great, and the Lord Himself, whose image it is, is magnified in my soul.

Basil. in Psalm xxxiii.

Athanasius.

magnificat

47. And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

ubi sup.

exultavit

BASIL. The first-fruit of the Spirit is peace and joy. Because then the holy Virgin had drunk in all the graces of the Spirit, she rightly adds, *And my spirit hath leaped for joy.* She means the same thing, soul and spirit. But the frequent mention of leaping for joy in the Scriptures implies a certain bright and cheerful state of mind in those who are worthy. Hence the Virgin exults in the Lord with an unspeakable springing (and bounding) of the heart for joy,

and in the breaking forth into utterance of a noble affection. It follows, *In God my Saviour.* BEDE. Because the spirit of the Virgin rejoices in the eternal Godhead of the same Jesus, (i.e. the Saviour,) whose flesh is formed in the womb by a temporal conception. AMBROSE. The soul of Mary therefore magnifies the Lord, and her spirit rejoiced in God, because with soul and spirit devoted to the Father and the Son, she worships with a pious affection the one God from whom are all things. But let every one have the spirit of Mary, so that he may rejoice in the Lord. If according to the flesh there is one mother of Christ, yet, according to faith, Christ is the fruit of all. For every soul receives the word of God if only he be unspotted and free from sin, and preserves it with unsullied purity. THEOPHYL. But he magnifies God who worthily follows Christ, and now that he is called Christian, lessens not the glory of Christ by acting unworthily, but does great and heavenly things; and then the Spirit (that is, the anointing of the Spirit) shall rejoice, (i.e. make him to prosper,) and shall not be withdrawn, so to say, and put to death. BASIL. But if at any time light shall have crept ubi sup. into his heart, and loving God and despising bodily things he shall have gained the perfect standing of the just, without any difficulty shall he obtain joy in the Lord. ORIGEN. But the soul first magnifies the Lord, that it may afterwards rejoice in God; for unless we have first believed, we cannot rejoice.

48. For He hath regarded the low estate of His handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

GREEK EX. She gives the reason why it becomes her to Isidore. magnify God and to rejoice in Him, saying, *For He hath regarded the lowliness of His handmaiden;* as if she said, "He Himself foresaw, therefore I did not look for Him." I was content with things lowly, but now am I chosen unto counsels unspeakable, and raised up from the earth unto the stars. AUG. O true lowliness, which hath borne God to men, hath Pseudo-Aug. Serm. de Assumpt. 208. given life to mortals, made new heavens and a pure earth, opened the gates of Paradise, and set free the souls of men.

The lowliness of Mary was made the heavenly ladder, by which God descended upon earth. For what does *regarded* mean but "approved?" For many seem in my sight to be lowly, but their lowliness is not regarded by the Lord. For if they were truly lowly, their spirit would rejoice not in the world, but in God. ORIGEN. But why was she lowly and cast down, who carried in her womb the Son of God? Consider that lowliness, which in the Scriptures is particularly praised as one of the virtues, is called by the philosophers "modestia." And we also may paraphrase it, that state of mind in which a man instead of being puffed up, casts himself down. BEDE. But she, whose humility is *regarded*, is rightly called *blessed* by all; as it follows, *For, behold, from henceforth all shall call me blessed.* ATHAN. For if as the Prophet says, *Blessed are they who have seed in Sion, and kinsfolk in Jerusalem,* how great should be the celebration of the divine and ever holy Virgin Mary, who was made according to the flesh, the Mother of the Word? GREEK EX. She does not call herself blessed from vain glory, for what room is there for pride in her who named herself the handmaid of the Lord? But, touched by the Holy Spirit, she foretold those things which were to come. BEDE. For it was fitting, that as by the pride of our first parent death came into the world, so by the lowliness of Mary should be opened the entrance into life. THEOPHYL. And therefore she says, *all generations,* not only Elisabeth, but also every nation that believed.

Isa. 31, 9. apud LXX.

Metaphrastes.

49. For He that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is His name:

THEOPHYL. The Virgin shews that not for her own virtue is she to be pronounced blessed, but she assigns the cause, saying, *For He that is mighty hath magnified me.*

Aug. sup.

AUG. What great things hath He done unto thee? I believe that a creature thou gavest birth to the Creator, a servant thou broughtest forth the Lord, that through thee God redeemed the world, through thee He restored it to life. TITUS BOS. But where are the great things, if they be not

that I still a virgin conceive (by the will of God) overcoming nature? I have been accounted worthy, without being joined to a husband, to be made a mother, not a mother of any one, but of the only-begotten Saviour.

BEDE. But this has reference to the beginning of the hymn, where it is said, *My soul doth magnify the Lord.* For that soul can alone magnify the Lord with due praise, for whom He deigns to do mighty things. TITUS BOS. But she says, *that is mighty,* that if men should disbelieve the work of her conception, namely, that while yet a virgin, she conceived, she might throw back the miracles upon the power of the Worker. Nor because the only-begotten Son has come to a woman is He thereby defiled, *for holy is His name.*

BASIL. But holy is the name of God called, not because in Ps. 33. in its letters it contains any significant power, but because in whatever way we look at God we distinguish His purity and holiness. BEDE. For in the height of His marvellous power He is far beyond every creature, and is widely removed from all the works of His hands. This is better understood in the Greek tongue, in which the very word which means holy, signifies as it were to be "apart from the earth." ἅγιον

50. And His mercy is on them that fear Him from generation to generation.

BEDE. Turning from God's special gifts to His general dealings, she describes the condition of the whole human race, *And His mercy is from generation to generation on them that fear Him.* As if she said, Not only for me hath He that is mighty done great things, but in every nation he that feareth God is accepted by Him. ORIGEN. For the mercy of God is not upon one generation, but extends to eternity from generation to generation. GREEK EX. According to Victor Pres. the mercy which He hath upon generations of generations, I conceive, and He Himself is united to a living body, out of mercy alone undertaking our salvation. Nor is His mercy shewn indiscriminately, but upon those who are constrained by the fear of Him in every nation; as it is said, *upon those who fear Him,* that is, upon those who being brought by repentance are turned to faith and renewal, for

the obstinate unbelievers have by their sin shut against themselves the gate of mercy. THEOPHYL. Or by this she means that they who fear shall obtain mercy, both in that generation, (that is, the present world,) and the generation which is to come, (that is, the life everlasting). For now they receive a hundred-fold, but hereafter far more.

Matt. 19, 29.

51. He hath shewed strength with His arm, He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

BEDE. In describing the state of mankind, she shews what the proud deserve, and what the humble; saying, *He hath shewed strength with His arm, &c.*, i.e. with the very Son of God. For as your arm is that whereby you work, so the arm of God is said to be His word by whom He made the world. ORIGEN. But to those that fear Him He hath done mighty things with His arm; though thou comest weak to God, if thou hast feared Him thou shalt obtain the promised strength. THEOPHYL. For in His arm, that is, His incarnate Son, He hath shewed strength, seeing that nature was vanquished, a virgin bringing forth, and God becoming man. GREEK EX. Or she says, *Hath shewed,* for *will shew strength,* not, as long ago, by the hand of Moses against the Egyptians, nor as by the Angel, (when he slew many thousand of the rebel Assyrians,) nor by any other instrument save His own power, He openly *triumphed,* overcoming *spiritual* enemies. Hence it follows, *He hath scattered, &c.* that is to say, every heart that was puffed up and not obedient to His coming He hath laid bare, and exposed the wickedness of their proud thoughts. CYRIL OF JERUS. But these words may be more appropriately taken to refer to the hostile ranks of the evil spirits. For they were raging on the earth, when our Lord's coming put them to flight, and restored those whom they had bound, to His obedience. THEOPHYL. This might also be understood of the Jews whom He scattered into all lands as they are now scattered.

Photius.

intelli-gibiles

52. He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree.

BEDE. The words, *He hath shewed strength with His arm,* and those which went before, *And His mercy is on them that fear Him from generation to generation,* must be joined to this verse by a comma only. For truly through all generations of the world by a merciful and just administration of Divine power, the proud do not cease to fall, and the humble to be exalted. As it is said, *He hath put down the mighty from their seat, He hath exalted the humble and meek.* CYRIL. The mighty in knowledge were the evil spirits, the Devil, the wise ones of the Gentiles, the Scribes and Pharisees; yet these He hath put down, and raised up those who humbled themselves under the mighty hand of God; giving them the power of treading upon serpents and scorpions and every power of the enemy. The Jews were also at one time puffed up with power, but unbelief slew them, and the mean and lowly of the Gentiles have through faith climbed up to the highest summit. GREEK EX. For our understanding is acknowledged to be the judgment-seat of God, but after the transgression, the powers of evil took their seat in the heart of the first man as on their own throne. For this reason, then, the Lord came and cast out the evil spirits from the seat of our will, and raised up those who were vanquished by devils, purging their consciences, and making their hearts His own dwelling-place.

1 Pet. 5, 6. Luke 10, 19. Macarius ex Serm. 1.

53. He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich He hath sent empty away.

GLOSS. Because human prosperity seems to consist chiefly in the honours of the mighty and the abundance of their riches, after speaking of the casting down of the mighty, and the exalting of the humble, he goes on to tell of the impoverishing of the rich and the filling of the poor, *He hath filled the hungry, &c.*

Gloss. non occ.

BASIL. These words regulate our conduct even with respect to sensible things, teaching the uncertainty of all worldly possessions, which are as short-lived as the wave which is dashed about to and fro by the violence of the wind. But spiritually all mankind suffered hunger except the Jews; for they possessed the treasures of legal tradition and the

ubi sup.

teachings of the holy prophets. But because they did not rest humbly on the Incarnate Word, they were sent away empty, carrying nothing with them, neither faith nor knowledge, and were bereft of the hope of good things, being shut out both of the earthly Jerusalem, and the life to come. But those of the Gentiles, who were brought low by hunger and thirst, because they clung to the Lord, were filled with spiritual goods. GLOSS. They also who desire eternal life with their whole soul, as it were hungering after it, shall be filled when Christ shall appear in glory; but they who rejoice in earthly things, shall at the end be sent away emptied of all happiness.

Gloss. ordin.

54. He hath holpen His servant Israel, in remembrance of His mercy.

55. As He spake to our fathers, Abraham, and to his seed for ever.

Gloss. non occ.

GLOSS. After a general mention of the Divine mercy and holiness, the Virgin changes the subject to the strange and marvellous dispensation of the new incarnation, saying, *He hath holpen His servant Israel, &c.* as a physician relieves the sick, becoming visible among men, that He might make Israel (i.e. him who sees God) His servant. BEDE. That is, obedient and humble; for he who disdains to be made humble, cannot be saved. BASIL. For by Israel she means not Israel after the flesh, whom their own title made noble, but the spiritual Israel, which retained the name of faith, straining their eyes to see God by faith.

non occ.

THEOPHYL. It might also be applied to Israel after the flesh, seeing that out of that body multitudes believed. But this He did remembering His mercy, for He hath fulfilled what He promised to Abraham, saying, *For in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.* This promise then the mother of God called to mind, saying, *As He spake to our father Abraham;* for it was said to Abraham, *I will place My covenant between Me and thee, and thy seed after thee, for an eternal covenant, that I shall be thy God, and the God of thy seed after thee.* BEDE. But by seed He means not so much those who are begotten in the flesh, as those who have

vide etiam Tit. Bost.

Gen. 12, 3.

Gen. 17, 12.

followed the steps of Abraham's faith, to whom the Saviour's coming was promised for evermore. GLOSS. For this promise of heritage shall not be narrowed by any limits, but to the very end of time there shall never lack believers, the glory of whose happiness shall be everlasting. Gloss. ordin.

56. And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned to her own house.

AMBROSE. Mary abode with Elisabeth until she had accomplished the time of her bringing forth; as it is said, *And Mary abode, &c.* THEOPHYL. For in the sixth month of the conception of the forerunner, the Angel came to Mary, and she abode with Elisabeth three months, and so the nine months are completed. AMBROSE. Now it was not only for the sake of friendship that she abode so long, but for the increase also of so great a prophet. For if at her first coming the child had so far advanced, that at the salutation of Mary he leaped in the womb, and his mother was filled with the Holy Spirit, how much must we suppose the presence of the Virgin Mary to have added during the experience of so long a time? Rightly then is she represented as having shewn kindness to Elisabeth, and preserved the mystical number. BEDE. For the chaste soul which conceives a desire of the spiritual word must of necessity submit to the yoke of heavenly discipline, and sojourning for the days as it were of three months in the same place, cease not to persevere until it is illuminated by the light of faith, hope, and charity. THEOPHYL. But when Elisabeth was going to bring forth, the Virgin departed, as it follows, *And she returned;* or, probably because of the multitude, who were about to assemble at the birth. But it became not a virgin to be present on such an occasion. GREEK EX. For it is the custom for virgins to go away when the pregnant woman brings forth. But when she reached her own home, she went to no other place, but abode there until she knew the time of her delivery was at hand. And Joseph doubting is instructed by an Angel. Metaphrastes.

57. Now Elisabeth's full time came that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son.

58. And her neighbours and her cousins heard how the Lord had shewed great mercy upon her; and they rejoiced with her.

AMBROSE. If you carefully observe, you will find that the word signifying *fulness* is nowhere used except at the birth of the righteous. Hence it is said, *Now Elisabeth's full time came.* For the life of the righteous hath fulness, but the days of the wicked are empty. CHRYS. And for that reason the Lord kept back the delivery of Elisabeth, that her joy might be increased, and her fame the greater. Hence it follows, *And her neighbours and cousins heard, &c.* For they who had known her barrenness were made the witnesses of the Divine grace, and no one seeing the child departed in silence, but gave praise to God, who had vouchsafed him beyond their expectation. AMBROSE. For the bringing forth of saints causes the rejoicing of many; it is a common blessing; for justice is a public virtue, and therefore at the birth of a just man a sign of his future life is sent beforehand, and the grace of the virtue which is to follow is represented, being foreshadowed by the rejoicing of the neighbours.

59. And it came to pass, that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; and they called him Zacharias, after the name of his father.

60. And his mother answered and said, Not so; but he shall be called John.

61. And they said unto her, There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name.

62. And they made signs to his father, how he would have him called.

63. And he asked for a writing table, and wrote, saying, His name is John. And they marvelled all.

64. And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue loosed, and he spake, and praised God.

CHRYS. The rite of circumcision was first delivered to Abraham as a sign of distinction, that the race of the Patriarch might be preserved in unmixed purity, and so might be able to obtain the promises. But now that the promise of the covenant is fulfilled, the sign attached to it is removed. So then through Christ circumcision ceased, and baptism came in its place; but first it was right that John should be circumcised; as it is said, *And it came to pass, that on the eighth day, &c.* For the Lord had said, *Let the child of eight days be circumcised among you.* But this measurement of time I conceive was ordered by Divine mercy for two reasons. First, because in its most tender years the child the more easily bears the cutting of the flesh. Secondly, that from the very operation itself, we might be reminded that it was done for a sign; for the young child scarcely distinguishes any of the things that are around him. But after the circumcision, the name was conferred, as it follows, *And they called him.* But this was done because we must first receive the seal of the Lord, then the name of man. Or, because no man except he first cast aside his fleshly lusts, which circumcision signifies, is worthy to have his name written in the book of life.

Chrys. in Gen. Hom. 39.

Gen. 17, 13.

AMBROSE. The holy Evangelist has especially remarked, that many thought the child should be called after his father Zacharias, in order that we might understand, not that any name of his kinsfolk was displeasing to his mother, but that the same word has been communicated to her by the Holy Spirit, which had been foretold by the Angel to Zacharias. And in truth, being dumb, Zacharias was unable to mention his son's name to his wife, but Elisabeth obtained by prophecy what she had not learnt from her husband. Hence it follows, *And she answered, &c.* Marvel not that the woman pronounced the name which she had never heard, seeing the Holy Spirit who imparted it to the Angel revealed it to her; nor could she be ignorant of the forerunner of the Lord, who had prophesied of Christ. And it well follows, *And they said unto her, &c.* that you might consider that the name belongs not to the family but to the Prophet. Zacharias also is questioned, and signs made to him, as it follows, *And they made signs to the father, &c.* But since unbelief had so bereft

him of utterance and hearing, that he could not use his voice, he spoke by his hand-writing, as it follows, *And he asked for a writing table, and wrote, saying, His name is John;* that is, we give no name to him who has received his name from God.

Orig. non occ. ORIGEN. Zacharias is by interpretation "remembering God," but John signifies "pointing to." Now "memory" relates to something absent, "pointing to," to something present. But John was not about to set forth the memory of God as absent, but with his finger to point him out as present, saying, *Behold the Lamb of God.* CHRYS. But the name John is also interpreted the grace of God. Because then by the favour of Divine grace, not by nature, Elisabeth conceived this son, they engraved the memory of the benefit on the name of the child. THEOPHYL. And because with the mother the dumb father also agreed as to the name of the child, it follows, *And they all marvelled.* For there was no one of this name among their kinsfolk that any one could say that they had both previously determined upon it. Greg. Naz. Orat. vi. GREG. NAZ. The birth of John then broke the silence of Zacharias, as it follows, *And his mouth was opened.* For it were unreasonable when the voice of the Word had come forth, that his father should remain speechless. AMBROSE. Rightly also, from that moment was his tongue loosed, for that which unbelief had bound, faith set free. Let us then also believe, in order that our tongue, which has been bound by the chains of unbelief, may be loosed by the voice of reason. Let us write mysteries by the Spirit if we wish to speak. Let us write the forerunner of Christ, not on tables of stone, but on the fleshly tablets of the heart. For he who names John, prophesies Christ. For it follows, *And he spake, giving thanks.*

BEDE. Now in an allegory, the celebration of John's birth was the beginning of the grace of the New Covenant. His neighbours and kinsfolk had rather give him the name of his father than that of John. For the Jews, who by the observance of the Law were united to him as it were *by ties of kindred,* chose rather to follow the righteousness which is of the Law, than receive the grace of faith. But the name of John, (i. e. the grace of God,) his mother in word, his father in writing, suffice to announce, for both the Law itself as well as the Psalms and the Prophecies,

in the plainest language foretel the grace of Christ; and that ancient priesthood, by the foreshadowing of its ceremonies and sacrifices, bears testimony to the same. And well doth Zacharias speak on the eighth day of the birth of his child, for by the resurrection of the Lord, which took place on the eighth day, i. e. the day after the *sabbath*, the hidden secrets of the legal priesthood were revealed. septimam sabbati.

65. And fear came on all that dwelt round about them: and all these sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill country of Judæa.

66. And all they that heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, What manner of child shall this be! And the hand of the Lord was with him.

THEOPHYL. As at the silence of Zacharias the people marvelled, so likewise when he spoke. Hence it is said, *And fear came upon all;* that from these two circumstances all might believe there was something great in the child that was born. But all these things were ordained, to the end that he who was to bear witness of Christ might also be esteemed trustworthy. Hence it follows, *And all they that heard them laid them up in their heart, saying, What manner of child, &c.* BEDE. For forerunning signs prepare the way for the forerunner of the truth, and the future prophet is recommended by auspices sent before him; hence it follows, *For the hand of the Lord was with him.* GREEK EX. For God worked miracles in John which he did not himself, but the right hand of God in him. GLOSS. But mystically, at the time of our Lord's resurrection, by the preaching of the grace of Christ, a wholesome dread shook the hearts not only of the Jews, (who were neighbours, either from the place of their dwelling, or from the knowledge of the law,) but of the foreign nations also. The name of Christ surmounts not only the hilly country of Judæa, but all the heights of worldly dominion and wisdom. Metaphrastes. Gloss. ordin.

67. And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying,

68. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for He hath visited and redeemed His people.

Ambrose. God in His mercy and readiness to pardon our sins, not only restores to us what He has taken away, but grants us favours even beyond our expectations. Let no one then distrust Him, let no one from consciousness of past sins despair of the Divine blessing. God knoweth how to change His sentence, if thou hast known how to correct thy sin, seeing he that was long silent prophesies; as it is said, *And Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit.* Chrys. That is, "with the working of the Holy Spirit;" for he had obtained the grace of the Holy Spirit, not in any manner, but fully; and the gift of prophecy shone forth in him; as it follows, *And he prophesied.* Origen. Now Zacharias being filled with the Holy Spirit utters two prophecies, the first relating to Christ, the second to John. And this is plainly proved by those words in which he speaks of the Saviour as present and already going about in the world, saying, *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He hath visited, &c.* Chrys. Zacharias, when he is blessing God, says, that He hath visited His people, meaning thereby
Matt. 15, 24. either the Israelites in the flesh, for *He came to the lost sheep of the house of Israel;* or the spiritual Israel, that is, the faithful, who were worthy of this visitation, making the providence of God of good effect towards them. Bede. But the Lord visited His people who were pining away as it were from long sickness, and by the blood of His only-begotten Son, redeemed them who were sold under sin. Which thing Zacharias, knowing that it would soon be accomplished, relates in the prophetic manner as if it were already passed. But he says, *His people,* not that when He came He found them His own, but that by visiting He made them so.

69. And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David.

Theophyl. God seemed to be asleep, disregarding the sins of the multitude, but in these last times coming in the

flesh, He hath risen up and trodden down the evil spirits who hated us. Hence it is said, *And He hath raised up an horn of salvation to us in the house of His servant David.* ORIGEN. Because Christ was born of the seed of David, according to the flesh, it is said, *A horn of salvation to us in the house of His servant David;* as it has also elsewhere been said, *A vineyard hath been planted in a horn,* i. e. in Isa. 5, 1. Jesus Christ.

CHRYS. Now by a horn he means power, glory, and honour, Chrys. Serm. de Anna. IV. deriving it metaphorically from the brute creatures, to whom God has given horns for defence and glory. BEDE. The kingdom of our Saviour Christ is called also the *horn of salvation,* because all our bones are clothed with flesh, but the horn alone stretches beyond the flesh; so the kingdom of Christ is called the horn of salvation, as reaching beyond the world and the delights of the flesh. According to which figure David and Solomon were consecrated by the horn of oil to the glory of the kingdom.

70. As He spake by the mouth of His holy prophets which have been since the world began.

THEOPHYL. That Christ was born of the house of David Micah relates, saying, *And thou, Bethlehem, art not the least* Micah 5, 2. *in the city of Juda, for out of thee shall come a governor who shall rule My people Israel.* But all the prophets spoke of the Incarnation, and therefore it is said, *As He spake by the mouth of His holy prophets.* GREEK Ex. Whereby he Victor Presbyter. means that God spoke through them, and that their speech was not of man. BEDE. But he says, *Which have been since the world began.* Because all the Scriptures of the Old Testament were a constant prophecy of Christ. For both our father Adam himself, and the other fathers, by their deeds bore testimony to His dispensation.

71. That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us.

BEDE. Having first briefly said, *He hath raised up a horn of salvation to us,* he goes on to explain his words, adding, *of salvation from our enemies.* As if he said, *He hath raised up*

to us a horn, i. e. *He hath raised up to us salvation from our enemies, and from the hand of all who hate us.* ORIGEN. Let us not suppose that this refers to our bodily enemies, but our
Ps. 24, 8. ghostly. For the Lord Jesus came mighty in battle to destroy all our enemies, that He might deliver us from their snares and temptation.

72. To perform the mercy promised to our forefathers, and to remember His holy covenant;

73. The oath which He sware to our father Abraham,

74. That He would grant unto us.

BEDE. Having announced that the Lord according to the declaration of the Prophet, would be born of the house of David, he now says, that the same Lord to fulfil the covenant He made with Abraham will deliver us, because chiefly to these patriarchs of Abraham's seed was promised the gathering of the Gentiles, or the Incarnation of Christ. But David is put first, because to Abraham was promised the holy assembly of the Church; whereas to David it was told that from him Christ was to be born. And therefore after what was said of David, he adds concerning Abraham the words, *To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, &c.* ORIGEN. I think that at the coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, both Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, were partakers of His mercy. For it is not to be believed, that they who had before seen His day, and were glad, should afterwards derive no advantage from His coming, since it is
Coloss. 1, 20. written, *Having made peace through the blood of His Cross, whether in earth or in heaven.*

THEOPHYL. The grace of Christ extends even to those who are dead, because through Him we shall rise again, not only we, but they also who have been dead before us. He performed His mercy also to our forefathers in fulfilling all their hopes and desires. Hence it follows, *And to remember His*
Gen. 22, 17. *holy covenant*, that covenant, namely, wherein He said, *Blessing, I will bless thee, and multiplying, I will multiply thee.* For Abraham was multiplied in all nations, who be-

came his children by adoption, through following the example of his faith. But the fathers also, seeing their children enjoy these blessings, rejoice together with them, just as if they received the mercy in themselves. Hence it follows, *The oath which He sware to our father Abraham, that He would grant unto us.*

BASIL. But let no one hearing that the Lord had sworn to Abraham, be tempted to swear. For as when the wrath of God is spoken of, it does not signify passion but punishment; so neither does God swear as man, but His word is in very truth expressed to us in place of an oath, confirming by an unchangeable sentence what He promised.

Basil. Hom. in Ps. 29. et in Ps. 14. App. op.

74. That we, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve Him without fear.

CHRYS. Having said that a horn of salvation had risen up to us from the house of David, he shews that through it we are partakers of His glory, and escape the assaults of the enemy. As he says, *That being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, we might serve Him without fear.* The two things above mentioned will not easily be found united. For many escape danger, but fail of a glorious life, as criminals discharged from prison by the king's mercy. On the other hand, some reap glory, but are compelled for its sake to encounter dangers, as soldiers in war embracing a life of honour are oftentimes in the greatest peril. But the horn brings both safety and glory. Safety indeed as it rescues us from the hands of our enemies, not slightly but in a wonderful manner, insomuch that we have no more fear, which are his very words; *that being delivered from the hand of our enemies, we might serve Him without fear.* ORIGEN. Or in another way; Frequently are men delivered from the hands of the enemy, but not without fear. For when fear and peril have gone before, and a man is then plucked from the enemies' hand, he is delivered indeed, but not without fear. Therefore said he, that the coming of Christ caused us to be snatched from the enemies' hands without fear. For we suffered not from their evil designs, but He suddenly

parting us from them, hath led us out to our own allotted resting place.

75. In holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life.

Chrys. Zacharias glorifies the Lord, because He hath made us to serve Him with full confidence, not in the flesh as Judah did with the blood of victims, but in the spirit with good works. And this is what he means by *in holiness and righteousness.* For holiness is, a proper observance of our duty towards God, righteousness of our duty towards man; as, for example, when a man devoutly performs the Divine commands, and lives honourably among his fellow men. But he does not say "before men," as of hypocrites desirous to
Rom. 2. 29. please men, but "before God," as of those *whose praise is not of men, but of God;* and this not once or for a time; but all the days of their life, as it is said, *all our days.* Bede. For whosoever either departs from God's service before he dies, or by any uncleanness stains either the strictness or purity of his faith, or strives to be holy and righteous before men, and not before God, does not yet serve the Lord in perfect freedom from the hand of his spiritual enemies, but after the example of the old Samaritans endeavours to serve equally the Gods of the Gentiles, and his Lord.

76. And thou, child, shalt be called the Prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways.

Ambrose. In prophesying of the Lord he rightly addresses the prophet, shewing that prophecy also is a gift of the Lord, in order that he might not, while enumerating public benefits, seem to be so ungrateful as to be silent of his own. Hence it is said, *And thou, child, shalt be called the Prophet of the Highest.* Origen. The reason I suppose that Zacharias hastened to speak to his son, was because he knew that John was shortly about to be a sojourner in the wilderness, and that he himself should see him no more. Ambrose. Now perhaps some may think it an absurd extravagance of the mind to address a child of eight days old. But if we keep our

eyes fixed upon higher things, we surely can understand that the son might hear the voice of his father, who before he was born heard the salutation of Mary. The Prophet knew that there were certain organs of hearing in a Prophet which were unclosed by the Spirit of God, not by the growth of the body. He possessed the faculty of understanding who was moved by the feeling of exultation. BEDE. Unless indeed Zacharias be supposed to have wished as soon as he was able to speak, to proclaim for their instruction who were present, the future gifts of his son, which he had long before learnt from the Angel. Let the Arians however hear that our Lord Christ, whom John went before prophesying of Him, Zacharias calls "the Most High," as it is said in the Psalms, *A man was born* Ps. 87, 5.
in her, and the Most Highest has established her. CHRYS. But as kings have their companions in arms, who stand nearest to them, so John, who was the friend of the Bridegroom, went before Him nigh unto His coming. And this is what follows, *For thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways.* For some prophets have preached the mystery of Christ at a distance, but he preached it nearer the time, that he might both see Christ and declare Him to others. GREG. Greg. xix. Mor. sup. Job 28, 23.
But all they who by preaching cleanse the hearts of their hearers from the filth of their sins, prepare a way for the coming of wisdom into the heart.

77. To give knowledge of salvation unto His people by the remission of their sins.

THEOPHYL. For the manner in which the forerunner prepared the way of the Lord he explains, adding, *To give knowledge of salvation.* The Lord Jesus is salvation, but the knowledge of salvation, i.e. of Christ, was given in John, who bore witness of Christ. BEDE. For as if desiring to explain the name of Jesus, i.e. the Saviour, he frequently makes mention of salvation, but lest men should think it was a temporal salvation which was promised, he adds, *for the forgiveness of sins.* THEOPHYL. For in no other way was He known to be God, but as having forgiven the sins of His people. For it is of God alone to forgive sins. BEDE. But the Jews prefer not to receive Christ, but to wait for Antichrist; for they desire

to be delivered not from the dominion of sin within, but from the yoke of man's bondage without.

78. Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us.

Theophyl. Because God hath forgiven our sins not for our works' sake, but through His mercy, it is therefore fitly
Chrys. Hom. xiv. in Matt. added, *Through the tender mercy of our God.* Chrys. Which mercy we find not indeed by our own seeking, but God from on high hath appeared to us, as it follows; *Whereby* (i.e. by His tender mercy) *the dayspring from on high* (that is,
Severus. Christ) *hath visited us,* taking upon Him our flesh. Greek Ex. Abiding on high yet present upon the earth, suffering neither division nor limitation, which thing neither can our understanding embrace, nor any power of words express.

79. To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Bede. Christ is rightly called the Day-spring, because He hath disclosed to us the rising of the true light, as it follows; *To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow*
Chrys. ubi sup. *of death.* Chrys. By darkness he means not material darkness, but error, and distance from the faith, or ungodliness.
Basil. sup Esai. c. ii. Basil. For in thick darkness were the Gentile people sitting, who were sunk deep in idolatry, until the rising light dispersed the darkness, and spread abroad the brightness of
Greg. iv. Moral. sup. Job 3, 5. truth. Greg. But the shadow of death is taken to mean the forgetfulness of the mind. For as death causes that which it kills to be no longer in life, so whatever oblivion touches ceases to be in the memory. Hence the Jewish people who were forgetful of God are said to sit in the shadow of death. The shadow of death is taken also for the death of the flesh, because as that is the true death, by which the soul is separated from God, so that is the shadow of death by which the flesh is separated from the
Ps 44, 19. soul. Hence in the words of the martyrs it is said, *the*

shadow of death has come over us. By the shadow of death also is represented the following of the devil, who is called *Death* in the Revelations, because as a shadow is formed according to the quality of the body, so the actions of the wicked are expressed according to the manner of their following him. CHRYS. He rightly says *sitting*, for we were not walking in darkness, but sitting down as having no hope of deliverance. THEOPHYL. But not only does the Lord at His rising give light to those who sit in darkness, but he says something further as it follows, *to direct our feet in the way of peace.* The way of peace is the way of righteousness, to which He has directed our feet, i.e. the affections of our souls. GREG. For we guide our steps in the way of peace, when we walk in that line of conduct wherein we depart not from the grace of our Maker. AMBROSE. Mark also, in how few words Elisabeth prophesies, in how many Zacharias, and yet each spoke filled with the Holy Spirit; but this discipline is preserved, that women may study rather to learn what are the Divine commands than to teach them.

Rev. 6, 8.
Chrys. ut sup.
Greg. Hom. 33. in Evang.

80. And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel.

BEDE. The future preacher of repentance, that he might the more boldly reclaim his hearers from the allurements of the world, passes the first part of his life in the deserts. Hence it is said, *And the child grew.* THEOPHYL. i.e. in bodily stature, and waxed strong in spirit, for together with his body at the same time his spiritual gift increased, and the workings of the Spirit were more and more manifested in him. ORIGEN. Or he increased in spirit, remaining not in the same measure in which he had begun, but the Spirit was ever growing in him. His will ever tending to better things, was making its own advances, and his mind ever contemplating something more divine, while his memory was exercising itself, that it might lay up more and more things in its treasury, and more firmly retain them. But he adds, *And he waxed strong.* For human nature is weak, as

Matt. 26, 41. we learn, *the flesh is weak.* It must therefore be made strong by the Spirit, for the Spirit is ready. Many wax strong in the flesh, but the wrestler of God must be strengthened by the Spirit that he may crush the wisdom of the flesh. He retires therefore to escape the noise of cities, and the thronging of the people. For it follows, *And he was in the deserts.* Where the air is purer, the sky more clear, and God a closer friend, that as the time had not yet arrived for his baptism and preaching, he might have leisure for praying, and might hold converse with the angels, calling upon God and fearing Him, saying, *Behold, here am I.* THEOPHYL. Or, he was in the deserts that he might be brought up beyond the reach of the malice of the multitude, and not be afraid of man. For if he had been in the world, perchance he had been corrupted by the friendship and conversation of the world. And secondly, that he who was to preach Christ might also be esteemed trust-worthy. But he was hid in the desert until it pleased God to shew him forth to the people of Israel, as it follows, *till the day of his shewing forth to Israel.* AMBROSE. And rightly is the time noted during which the prophet was in the womb, in order that the presence of Mary might not be passed over, while they are silent about the time of his childhood, because being strengthened in the womb by the presence of the Mother of the Lord, he knew not the struggles of childhood.

CHAP. II.

1. And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.

2. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.)

3. And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.

4. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judæa, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David :)

5. To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

BEDE. The Son of God, about to be born in the flesh, as by His birth of a virgin He shewed that the grace of virginity was most pleasing in His sight, is therefore begotten in the most peaceful time of the world, because He taught men to seek peace, and condescends to visit those who follow it. But there could be no greater sign of peace than for the whole world to be brought together under one taxing, while its ruler Augustus reigned with so great peace for the twelve years, about the time of our Lord's nativity, that war having been quelled throughout the whole world, there seemed to be a literal fulfilment of the Prophet's prediction, *They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, &c.* (Isa. 2, 4.) GREEK EX. (Metaphrastes et Alexander Monachus.) Christ is born also at a time when the princes of Judah had failed, and the kingdom was transferred to Roman governors, to whom the Jews paid tribute; and then was fulfilled the

Gen. 49, 10. prophecy, saying, *There shall not fail a leader from Judah, nor a prince from between his feet, until He shall come who is to be sent.* And now when Cæsar Augustus was in the 42nd year of his reign, there went forth an edict from him that all the world should be taxed for the payment of tribute, the management of which he committed to a certain Cyrinus, whom he made governor of Judæa and Syria; and so it follows, *This taxing was first made, &c.*

Bede. St. Luke points out, that this taxing was either the first of those which comprehended the whole world, for before this very many parts of the earth are often mentioned as having been taxed; or first began at that time when Cyrinus was sent into Syria. Ambrose. He has rightly added the name of the governor, to mark the course of time. For if the names of the Consuls are affixed to the tables of prices, how much more ought the time to be noted down, of that event which was the redemption of all men? Bede. Now the registration of property was so appointed by Divine guidance, that every one was ordered to go into his own country, as it follows, *And they all went to be taxed, every one to his own city.* Which so came to pass, in order that the Lord, conceived in one place, born in another, might the more easily escape the fury of the crafty Herod. Hence it follows: *Now* Chrys. in diem natal. Christi. *Joseph also went up from Galilee.* Chrys. It was the Lord who directed Augustus to give this edict, that he might minister unto the coming of the Only-begotten; for it was this edict that brought Christ's mother into her country as the prophets had foretold, namely, to Bethlehem of Judæa, according to the word, *to a city of David, which is called Bethlehem.* Irenæus cont. Hær. l. 3. c. 11. Greek Ex. Now he added, *a city of David,* that he might declare that the promise made by God to David, namely, *that from the fruit of his loins there should go before him a king for ever,* was already fulfilled. Whence it follows, 2 Sam. 7, 12. Ps. 132, 11. *Because he was of the house and lineage of David.* But since Joseph was of the family of David, it pleased the Evangelist to make known also that the Virgin herself was of the same family, because the Divine Law enjoined marriages between those of the same line; and therefore it follows, *with Mary* Cyril. non occ. *his espoused wife.* Cyril. It is said that she was espoused, to imply that nothing more than espousals preceded the con-

ception; for it was not by man's seed that the Holy Virgin conceived.

GREG. But the registering of the whole world when our Lord was about to be born was mystical; for He appeared in the flesh who should write down the names of His own elect in eternity. AMBROSE. There is described a secular registration, implied a spiritual, to be laid before the King not of earth but of Heaven; a registering of faith: a census of souls. For the old census of the Synagogue was abolished, a new census of the Church was preparing. And to decide that the census was not of Augustus, but of Christ, the whole world is ordered to be registered. For who could demand the registration of the whole world but He who had dominion over it? for the earth is not of Augustus, but *the earth is the Lord's.* BEDE. And He most perfectly fulfilled what the name Augustus signifies, in that He was both desirous and able to increase His own. THEOPHYL. Because it was fit also that at Christ's coming the worship of many Gods should cease, and one God only be worshipped, one king is described as ruling the world. ORIGEN. To those who attentively consider it, there seems to be expressed a kind of sacrament, in its being necessary that Christ should be put down in the registration of the whole world; in order that His name being written with all, He might sanctify all, and being placed in the census with the whole world, He might impart to the world the communion of Himself. BEDE. As at that time in the reign of Augustus and under the governorship of Cyrinus, every one went to his own city to make returns of his property; so now when Christ reigns through His teachers (the governors of the Church) ought we to make returns of righteousness. AMBROSE. This was then the first public enrolment of souls to the Lord, to whom all enrol themselves not at the voice of the crier, but of the Prophet, who says, *O clap your hands, all ye people.* But in order that men might know that the taxing was just, there came up to it Joseph and Mary, the just man and the virgin. He who kept the word and she who obeyed it. BEDE. Our city and country is the resting-place of the blessed, to which we ought to be travelling with daily increasing virtues. But day by day does Holy Church wait upon her Teacher, and

Greg. Hom. 8. in Ev.

Ps. 24, 1.

augere.

Ps. 47, 1.

going up from the course of worldly business (which the name of Galilee signifies) to the city of Judah, i.e. the city of confession and praise, make returns of her devotion to the Eternal King. She, after the example of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a Virgin has conceived us of the Spirit. Though espoused to another, she is made fruitful by Him; and while visibly joined to the Pontiff who is placed over her, is invisibly filled with the graces of the Spirit. And hence Joseph is well interpreted *increased*, declaring by his very name, that the earnestness of the master speaking is of no avail, except he receive increasing help from above, that he may be heard.

6. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

7. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

Ambrose. St. Luke has briefly explained the manner, time, and also the place in which Christ was born in the flesh; the manner, that is, in which the espoused has conceived, a virgin has borne offspring. Greg. Nyss. Though coming in the form of man, yet not in every thing is He subject to the laws of man's nature; for while His being born of a woman, tells of human nature; virginity becoming capable of childbirth betokens something above man. Of Him then His mother's burden was light, the birth immaculate, the delivery without pain, the nativity without defilement, neither beginning from wanton desire, nor brought to pass with sorrow. For as she who by her guilt engrafted death into our nature, was condemned to bring forth in trouble, it was meet that she who brought life into the world should accomplish her delivery with joy. But through a virgin's purity He makes His passage into mortal life at a time in which the darkness was beginning to fail, and the vast expanse of night to fade away before the exceeding brightness of the light. For the death of sin had brought an end of wickedness which from henceforth tends to nothing

Greg. in Diem Nat. Christi.

by reason of the presence of the true light which has illuminated the whole world with the rays of the Gospel. BEDE. He condescended to become incarnate at that time, that after His birth he might be enrolled in Cæsar's taxing, and in order to bring liberty to us might Himself become subject to slavery. It was well also that our Lord was born at Bethlehem, not only as a mark of the royal crown, but on account of the sacrament of the name. GREG. Bethlehem is by interpretation the house of bread. For it is the Lord Himself who says, *I am the bread of life which came down from heaven.* The place therefore where the Lord was born was before called the house of bread, because it was there that He was to appear in His fleshly nature who should refresh the souls of the elect with spiritual fulness. BEDE. But down to the very end of time, the Lord ceases not to be conceived at Nazareth, to be born at Bethlehem, whenever any of His hearers taking of the flour of the word makes himself a house of eternal bread. Daily in the Virgin's womb, i.e. in the mind of believers, Christ is conceived by faith, born by baptism. It follows, *and she brought forth her firstborn son.* JEROME. From this Helvidius[d] strives to prove that no one can be called firstborn who has not brothers, as he is called only-begotten who is the only son of his parents. But we thus determine the matter. Every only-begotten is firstborn, not every firstborn is only-begotten. We say not that he is first-begotten whom others follow, but before whom there is no one; (otherwise, supposing there is no firstborn but who has brothers following him, there are then no firstlings due to the priests as long as there are no others begotten;) lest perchance when no birth follows afterward, there should be an only-begotten and not a firstborn. BEDE. He is also only-begotten in the substance of His divinity, firstborn in the taking upon Himself humanity, firstborn in grace, only-begotten in nature.

Greg. Hom. viii. in Ev.

John 6, 51.

Hier. cont. Helvid.

JEROME. Now there was no midwife, no tender anxiety of women; she wrapped the Child up in swaddling clothes, herself both mother and midwife. BEDE. He who clothes the whole world with its varied beauty, is wrapped up in common

Hier. ubi sup.

[d] Helvidius wrote a book to prove that the Virgin Mary had other children after our Lord's birth. He flourished at Rome A.D. 380.

linen, that we might be able to receive the best robe; He by whom all things are made, is folded both hands and feet, that our hands might be raised up for every good work, and
Meta-phrastes. our feet directed in the way of peace. Greek Ex. Oh the wonderful straitening and banishment which He underwent, who holds the whole world in His hands! From the very beginning He seeks for poverty, and ennobles it in His own
Chrys. non occ. person. Chrys. Surely if He had so willed it, He might have come moving the heavens, making the earth to shake, and shooting forth his thunderbolts; but such was not the way of His going forth; His desire was not to destroy, but to save; and to trample upon human pride from its very birth, therefore He is not only man, but a poor man, and has chosen a poor mother, who had not even a cradle where she might lay her newborn Child; as it follows, *and she laid Him in the manger*. Bede. He is confined in the narrow space of a rude manger, whose seat is the heavens, that He may give us ample room in the joys of His heavenly kingdom. He who is the bread of Angels is laid down in a manger, that He might feast us, as it were the sacred animals, with the bread of His flesh. Cyril. He finds man in his corrupt affections become like the beasts that perish, and therefore He is laid in the manger, in the place of food, that we changing the life of beasts, might be brought to the knowledge that befits man, partaking not of hay, but of the heavenly bread, the lifegiving body. Bede. He who sits at His Father's right hand, finds no room in an
John 14, 2. inn, that He might prepare for us in His Father's house many mansions; He is born not in His Father's house, but in an inn and by the way side, because through the mystery of the incarnation He was made the way by which to bring us to our
John 14, 6. country, (where we shall enjoy the truth and the life.) Greg.
Greg. ubi sup. And that He might shew that on account of the human form which He took upon Him, He was born as in a strange country, not according to His power but according to His nature. Ambrose. On thy account then am I weak, in thee am I strong. On thy account am I poor, in thee am I rich. Consider not what thou seest, but acknowledge that thou art redeemed. I owe more, O Lord Jesus, to Thy sufferings that I am redeemed, than to Thy works that I am created. It were no advantage to be born, had it not advantaged me to be redeemed also.

8. And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

9. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

10. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

11. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

12. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

AMBROSE. Observe with what care God builds up our faith. An Angel teaches Mary; an Angel teaches Joseph; an Angel the shepherds also, of whom it is said, *And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field.* CHRYS. To Joseph the Angel appeared in a dream, as to one who might be easily brought to believe, but to the shepherds in visible shape as to men of a ruder nature. But the Angel went not to Jerusalem, sought not for Scribes and Pharisees, (for they were corrupt and tormented with envy.) But these were simple men living in the ancient practices of Moses and the Patriarchs. There is a certain road which leads by innocence to philosophy. BEDE. No where in the whole course of the Old Testament do we find that the Angels who so constantly appear to the Patriarchs, came in the day time. This privilege was rightly kept for this time when there arose in the darkness a light to them that were true of heart. Hence it follows, *and the glory of God shone round about them.* He is sent forth from the womb, but He shines from heaven. He lies in a common inn, but He lives in celestial light.

Bede Hom. inter Hyem. de Sanctis v.

Ps. 112, 4.

GREEK EX. They were alarmed at the miracle, as it follows, *And they were afraid, &c.* But the Angel dispels their rising fears. He not only soothes their terrors, but pours gladness into their hearts; for it follows, *For, behold, I bring you good*

Geometer.

tidings of great joy, &c., not to the Jewish people only, but to all. The cause of their joy is declared; the new and wonderful birth is made manifest by the very names. It follows, *For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.* The first of these, i. e. the Saviour, has reference to the action, the third, i. e. the Lord, to the dignity of the person. CYRIL. But that which is in the middle, namely, Christ, has reference to the adoration, and signifies not the nature, but the compound substance of two natures. For on Christ our Saviour we confess the anointing to have been performed, not however figuratively, (as formerly on kings by the oil,) and as if by prophetic grace, nor
Isa. 45. for the accomplishment of any work, as it is said in Isaiah, *Thus saith the Lord to His anointed, to Cyrus;* who although he was an idolater was said to be *anointed*, that he might by the decree of Heaven take possession of the whole province of Babylon; but the Saviour as man in the form of a servant, was anointed by the Holy Spirit, as God He Himself by His Holy Spirit anoints those that believe on Him.
Geometer. GREEK EX. He marks the time of our Lord's nativity, when he says, *To-day*, and the place when he adds, *In the city of David;* and the signs thereof when it follows, *And there shall be a sign, &c.* Now the Angels bring tidings to the shepherds of the Chief Shepherd, as of a lamb discovered and brought up in a cave. BEDE. The infancy of the Saviour was impressed upon us, both by frequent heraldings of Angels and testimonies of Evangelists, that we might be the more deeply penetrated in our hearts by what has been done for us. And we may observe, that the sign given us of the new-born Saviour was, that He would be found not clothed in Tyrian purple, but wrapped in poor swaddling clothes, not lying on gilded couches, but in a manger.
Maxim. in Serm. Nativ. 4. MAXIMUS. But if perhaps the swaddling clothes are mean in thy eyes, admire the Angels singing praises together. If thou despisest the manger, raise thy eyes a little, and behold the new star in heaven proclaiming to the world the Lord's nativity. If thou believest the mean things, believe also the mighty. If thou disputest about those which betoken His lowliness, look with reverence on what is high and heavenly.

GREG. It was in a mystery that the Angel appeared to the shepherds while they were watching, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, implying that they are thought worthy above the rest to see sublime things who take a watchful care of their faithful flocks; and while they themselves are piously watching over them, the Divine grace shines widely round about them. BEDE. For in a mystery, those shepherds, and their flocks, signify all teachers and guides of faithful souls. The night in which they were keeping watch over their flocks, indicates the dangerous temptations from which they never cease to keep themselves, and those placed under their care. Well also at the birth of our Lord do shepherds watch over their flocks; for He was born who says, *I am the good Shepherd:* but the time also was at hand in which the same Shepherd was to recall His scattered sheep to the pastures of life. ORIGEN. But if we would rise to a more hidden meaning, I should say, that there were certain shepherd Angels, who direct the affairs of men, and while each one of them was keeping his watch, an angel came at the birth of the Lord, and announced to the shepherds that the true Shepherd had arisen. For Angels before the coming of the Saviour could bring little help to those entrusted to them, for scarcely did one single Gentile believe in God. But now whole nations come to the faith of Jesus.

Greg. ubi sup.

Bede Hom. ubi sup.

John 10, 11. 16.

13. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

14. Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

BEDE. Lest the authority of a single Angel should appear small, as soon as one had revealed the sacrament of the new birth, straightway there was present a multitude of the heavenly host. Rightly has the attending Chorus of Angels received the name of 'heavenly host,' seeing they both humbly bring their aid to that Leader mighty in battle, who has appeared to put down the powers of the air, and also themselves by their celestial arms bravely vanquish those opposing

powers lest they should prevail as they wish in tempting men. But because He is both God and man, rightly do they sing Peace to men and Glory to God. As it follows, *Praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest.* As soon as one Angel, one messenger, had brought the good tidings that God was born in the flesh, the multitude of the heavenly host broke forth in the praise of the Creator, in order both to fix their devotion on Christ, and to instruct us by their example, that as often as any of the brethren shall sound forth the word of sacred learning, or we ourselves shall have brought these holy things home to our minds, we should with our whole heart, our mouth and hands, return praise to God. CHRYS. Of old, indeed, Angels were sent to punish, as, for instance to the Israelites, to David, to the men of Sodom, to the valley of weeping. Now, on the other hand, they sing the song of thanksgiving to God: because He hath revealed to them His coming down to men. GREG. At the same time they also give praises because their voices of gladness accord well with our redemption, and while they behold our acceptance, they rejoice also that their number is completed. BEDE. They wish also peace to men, as they add, *On earth peace to men,* because those whom they had before despised as weak and abject, now that our Lord has come in the flesh they esteem as friends. CYRIL. This peace has been made through Christ, for He has reconciled us by Himself to God and our Father, having taken away our guilt, which was the ground of offence also. He has united two nations in one man, and has joined the heavenly and the earthly in one flock. BEDE. For whom they ask peace is explained in the words, *Of good will.* For them, namely, who receive the new-born Christ. For there is no peace to the ungodly, but much peace to them that love the name of God. ORIGEN. But the attentive reader will ask, How then does the Saviour say, *I came not to send peace on the earth,* whereas now the Angels' song of His birth is, *On earth peace to men?* It is answered, that peace is said to be to men of good-will. For the peace which the Lord does not give on the earth is not the peace of good-will. AUG. For righteousness belongs to good-will. CHRYS. Behold the wonderful working of God. He first brings

Bochim. Judges 2, 1.
Greg. 28. Moral. sup. Job 38, 7.
2 Cor. 5, 18. 19. Eph 2, 16. Col. 1, 20.
Isa. 57, 20. Ps. 119, 165.
Aug. 13. de Trin. cap. 13.

Angels down to men, and then brings men up to heaven. The heaven became earth, when it was about to receive earthly things.

ORIGEN. But in a mystery, the Angels saw that they could not accomplish the work committed to them without Him who was truly able to save, and that their healing fell short of what the care of men required. And so it was as if there should come one who had great knowledge in medicine, and those who before were unable to heal, acknowledging now the hand of a master, grudge not to see the corruptions of wounds ceasing, but break forth into the praises of the Physician, and of that God who sent to them and to the sick a man of such knowledge; the multitudes of the Angels praised God for the coming of Christ.

15. And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

16. And they came with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

17. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.

18. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

19. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.

20. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

GREEK EX. The shepherds were filled with astonishment Geometer.
at the things that they saw and heard, and so they left their sheep-folds, and set out by night to Bethlehem, seeking for the light of the Saviour; and therefore it is said, *They spoke*

one to another, &c. BEDE. As men who were truly watching, they said not, *Let us see* (*the child;* but) *the word* which has come to pass, i.e. the Word which was from the beginning, let us see how it has been made flesh for us, since this very Word is the Lord. For it follows, *Which the Lord hath made, and has shewn to us;* i.e. Let us see how the Lord hath made Himself, and hath shewn His flesh to us. AMBROSE. How remarkably Scripture weighs the import of each word. For when we behold the flesh of the Lord, we behold the Word, which is the Son. Let not this seem to you a slight example of faith, because of the humble character of the shepherds. For simplicity is sought for, not pride. It follows, *And they came in haste.* For no one indolently seeks after Christ. ORIGEN. But because they came in haste, and not with loitering steps, it follows, *They found Mary,* (i.e. her who had brought Jesus into the world,) *and Joseph,* (i.e. the guardian of our Lord's birth,) *and the babe lying in the manger,* (i.e. the Saviour Himself.) BEDE. It seems to succeed in due order, that after having rightly celebrated the incarnation of the Word, we should at length come to behold the actual glory of that Word. Hence it follows: *But when they saw it, they made known the word which had been spoken to*
Photius. *them.* GREEK EX. Beholding with hidden faith indeed the happy events which had been told them, and not content with marvelling at the reality of those things which at the very first they saw and embraced when the Angel told them, they began to relate them not only to Mary and Joseph, but to the others also, (and what is more, they impressed them on their minds,) as it follows, *And all who heard it marvelled.* For how could it be otherwise, at the sight of one of the heavenly host upon earth, and earth in peace reconciled to heaven; and that ineffable Child binding together in one, by His divinity, heavenly things, by His humanity, earthly things, and by this conjunction of Himself affecting a wonderful union! GLOSS. Not only do they marvel at the mystery of the Incarnation, but also at so wonderful an attestation of the shepherds, men who could not have devised these unheard of things, but were with simple eloquence proclaiming the truth. AMBROSE. Esteem not the words of the shepherds as mean and despicable. For from the shepherds Mary increases

her faith, as it follows: *Mary kept all these sayings, and pondered them in her heart.* Let us learn the chastity of the sacred Virgin in all things, who no less chaste in her words than in her body, gathered up in her heart the materials of faith. BEDE. For keeping the laws of virgin modesty, she who had known the secrets of Christ would divulge them to no one, but comparing what she had read in prophecy with what she now acknowledged to have taken place, she did not utter them with the mouth, but preserved them shut up in her heart. GREEK EX. Whatever the Angel had said unto her, whatever she had heard from Zacharias, and Elisabeth, and the shepherds, she collected them all in her mind, and comparing them together, perceived in all one harmony. Truly, He was God who was born from her.

Bede Hom. ubi sup.

Metaphrastes.

ATHANAS. But every one rejoiced in the nativity of Christ, not with human feelings, as men are wont to rejoice when a son is born, but at the presence of Christ and the lustre of the Divine light. As it follows: *And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for every thing they had heard, &c.* BEDE. That is to say, from the Angels, and had seen, i.e. in Bethlehem, as it was told them, i.e. they glory in this, that when they came they found it even as it was told them, or as it was told them they give praise and glory to God. For this they were told by the Angels to do, not in very word commanding them, but setting before them the form of devotion when they sung glory to God in the highest.

Athan. non occ.

BEDE. To speak in a mystery, let the shepherds of spiritual flocks, (nay, all the faithful,) after the example of these shepherds, go in thought even to Bethlehem, and celebrate the incarnation of Christ with due honours. Let us go indeed casting aside all fleshly lusts, with the whole desire of the mind even to the heavenly Bethlehem, (i.e. the house of the living bread,) that He whom they saw crying in the manger we may deserve to see reigning on the throne of His Father. And such bliss as this is not to be sought for with sloth and idleness, but with eagerness must we follow the footsteps of Christ. When they saw Him they knew Him; and let us haste to embrace in the fulness of our love those things which were spoken of our Saviour, that when the time shall come that we shall see with perfect knowledge

Bede Hom. ubi sup.

we may be able to comprehend them. BEDE. Again, the shepherds of the Lord's flock by contemplating the life of the fathers who went before them, (which preserved the bread of life,) enter as it were the gates of Bethlehem, and find therein none other than the virgin beauty of the Church, that is, Mary; the manly company of spiritual doctors, that is, Joseph; and the lowly coming of Christ contained in the pages of Holy Scripture, that is, the infant child Christ, laid in the manger.

Isa. 3, 1. ORIGEN. That was the manger which Israel knew not, according to those words of Isaiah, *The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib.* BEDE. The shepherds did not hide in silence what they knew, because to this end have the Shepherds of the Church been ordained, that what they have learned in the Scriptures they might explain to their hearers. BEDE. The masters of the spiritual flocks also, while others sleep, at one time by contemplation enter into the heavenly places, at another time pass around them by seeking the examples of the faithful, at another time by teaching return to the public duties of the pastoral office. BEDE. Every one of us, even he who is supposed to live as a private person, exercises the office of shepherd, if, keeping together a multitude of good actions and pure thoughts, he strive to rule them with due moderation, to feed them with the food of the Scriptures, and to preserve them against the snares of the devil.

(Bede Hom. ubi sup.) (Bede in loc.) (Bede Hom. ubi sup.)

21. And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before He was conceived in the womb.

Bede ubi sup. BEDE. Having related our Lord's nativity, the Evangelist adds, *And after that eight days were accomplished for the circumcision of the child.* AMBROSE. Who is this Child, but He of whom it was said, *Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given?* For He was made under the law, that He might redeem them who were under the law. EPIPH. Now the followers of Ebion and Cerinthus say [c], "It is enough for

(Is. 9, 6. Gal. 4, 5. Epiph. lib. i. Hær. 30.)

[c] The Ebionites and Cerinthians agreed in denying the divinity of our Saviour. They both adhered to the Jewish ceremonies, particularly cir-

a disciple if he be as his Master. But Christ circumcised Himself. Be thou therefore circumcised." But herein do they deceive themselves, destroying their own principles; for if Ebion should confess that Christ as God descended from heaven and was circumcised on the eighth day, it might then afford the ground of an argument for circumcision; but since he affirms Him to be mere man, surely as a boy He cannot be the cause of Himself being circumcised, as neither are infants the authors of their own circumcision. But we confess that it is God Himself who has descended from heaven, and that enclosed in a virgin's womb, He abode there the whole time necessary for her delivery, until He should perfectly form to Himself of the virgin's womb a human body; and that in this body He was not in appearance but truly circumcised on the eighth day, in order that the figures having come to this spiritual fulfilment, both by Himself and His disciples, might now be spread abroad no longer the figures but the reality. ORIGEN. As we have died with Him at His death, and risen together with Him at His resurrection, so with Him have we been circumcised, and therefore need not now circumcision in the flesh. EPIPHAN. Epiph. ubi sup.
Christ was circumcised for several reasons. First indeed to shew the reality of His flesh, in opposition to Manichæus[f] and those who say that He came forth in appearance only. Secondly, that He might prove that His body was not of the same substance with the Deity, according to Apollinaris, and that it descended not from heaven, as Valentinian said. Thirdly, to add a confirmation to circumcision which He had of old instituted to await His coming. Lastly, to leave no excuse to the Jews. For had He not been circumcised, they might have objected that they could not receive Christ uncircumcised. BEDE. He was circumcised also that He might

cumcision and the sabbath, and condemned St. Paul as an apostate from the Law. They taught also the Gnostic heresy, that Jesus was the son of Joseph, but excelled other men in wisdom and holiness, and that Christ descended upon Him at Baptism in the shape of a dove, but fled away before the crucifixion, so that Jesus alone died. Theodoret. Hær. Fab., l. ii. c. i. iii.

[f] For the heresy of the Manichæans, see St. Augustin's Confessions, note a. Apollinarius flourished A.D. 370. He was Bishop of Laodicea. His heresy was condemned either 373, or 377—378, at Rome. Greg. Naz. Ep. 101, 102, 202. Valentinus was a Gnostic heretic and native of Egypt, who believed that Christ's body descended from heaven, and passed through the Virgin Mary *quasi aqua per canalem*. See Tertull. de Præscr. c. 44.

enjoin upon us by His example the virtue of obedience, and might take compassion on them, who being placed under the law, were unable to bear the burdens of the law, to the end that He who came in the likeness of sinful flesh might not reject the remedy with which sinful flesh was wont to be healed. For circumcision brought in the law the same assistance of a saving cure to the wound of original sin which Baptism does in the time of the grace of revelation, except that as yet the circumcised could not enter the gates of the heavenly kingdom, but comforted after death with a blessed rest in Abraham's bosom, they waited with a joyful hope for their entrance into eternal peace. ATHAN. For circumcision expressed nothing else, but the stripping off of the old birth, seeing that part was circumcised which caused the birth of the body. And thus it was done at that time as a sign of the future baptism through Christ. Therefore as soon as that of which it was a sign came, the figure ceased. For since the whole of the old man Adam is taken away by baptism, there remains nothing which the cutting of a part prefigures. CYRIL. It was the custom on the eighth day to perform the circumcision of the flesh. For on the eighth day Christ rose from the dead, and conveyed to us a spiritual circumcision, saying, *Go and teach all nations, baptizing them.* BEDE. Now in His resurrection was prefigured the resurrection of each of us both in the flesh and the Spirit, for Christ has taught us by being circumcised that our nature must both now in itself be purged from the stain of vice, and at the last day be restored from the plague of death. And as the Lord rose on the eighth day, i.e. the day after the seventh, (which is the Sabbath,) so we also after six ages of the world and after the seventh, which is the rest of souls, and is now carrying on in another life, shall rise as on the eighth day. CYRIL. But according to the command of the law, on the same day He received the imposition of a name, as it follows, *His name was called Jesus,* which is interpreted Saviour. For He was brought forth for the salvation of the whole world, which by His circumcision He prefigured, as the Apostle says to the Colossians, "Ye are circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the stripping off of the body of the flesh, to wit, the circumcision of Christ." BEDE. That upon

De Sabbato et Circumcisione.

Matt. 28, 19.

Col. 2, 11.

the day of His circumcision He also received the imposition of the name was likewise done in imitation of the old observances. For Abraham, who received the first *sacrament* of circumcision, was on the day of his circumcision thought Gen.17, 5. worthy to be blessed by the increase of his name. ORIGEN. But the name of Jesus, a glorious name and worthy of all honour, a name which is above every other, ought not first to be uttered by men, nor by them be brought into the world. Therefore significantly the Evangelist adds, *which was called of the Angel, &c.* BEDE. Of this name the elect also in their spiritual circumcision rejoice to be partakers, that as from Christ they are called Christians, so also from the Saviour they may be called saved, which title was given them of God not only before they were conceived through faith in the womb of the Church, but even before the world began.

22. And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought Him to Jerusalem, to present Him to the Lord;

23. (As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;)

24. And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.

25. And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Ghost was upon him.

CYRIL. Next after the circumcision they wait for the time of purification, as it is said, *And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were come.* BEDE. If you diligently examine the words of the law, you will find indeed that the mother of God as she is free from all connexion with man, so is she exempt from any obligation of the law. For not every woman who brings forth, but she

who has received seed and brought forth, is pronounced unclean, and by the ordinances of the law is taught that she must be cleansed, in order to distinguish probably from her who though a virgin has conceived and brought forth. But that we might be loosed from the bonds of the law, as did Christ, so also Mary submitted herself of her own will to the law. TITUS BOST. Therefore the Evangelist has well observed, that the days of her purification were come according to the law, who since she had conceived of the Holy Spirit, was free from all uncleanness. It follows, *They brought Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord.* [g] ATHAN. But when was the Lord hid from His Father's eye, that He should not be seen by Him, or what place is excepted from His dominion, that by remaining there He should be separate from His Father, unless brought to Jerusalem and introduced into the temple? But for us perhaps these things were written. For as not to confer grace on Himself was He made man and circumcised in the flesh, but to make us Gods through grace, and that we might be circumcised in the Spirit, so for our sakes is He presented to the Lord, that we also might learn to present ourselves to the Lord. BEDE. On the thirty-third day after His circumcision He is presented to the Lord, signifying in a mystery that no one but he who is circumcised from his sins is worthy to come into the Lord's sight, that no one who has not severed himself from all human ties can perfectly enter into the joys of the heavenly city. It follows, *As it is written in the law of the Lord.* ORIGEN. Where are they who deny that Christ proclaimed in the Gospel the law to be of God, or can it be supposed that the righteous God made His own Son under a hostile law which He Himself had not given! It is written in the law of Moses as follows,
Ex. 13, 2, 12. *Every male which openeth the womb shall be called holy unto the Lord.* BEDE. By the words, *opening the womb*, he signifies the first-born both of man and beast, and each one of which was, according to the commandment, to be called holy to the Lord, and therefore to become the property of the priest, that is, so far that he was to receive a price for

[g] This passage is not among the fragments of the commentary on St. Luke given in the Ben. Ed. of Athanasius, but is to be found in those published by Montfaucon in his Collectio Patrum, 1707.

every first-born of man, and oblige every unclean animal to be ransomed. GREG. NYSS. Now this commandment of the law seems to have had its fulfilment in the incarnate God, in a very remarkable and peculiar manner. For He alone, ineffably conceived and incomprehensibly brought forth, opened the Virgin's womb, till then unopened by marriage, and after this birth miraculously retaining the seal of chastity. AMBROSE. For no union with man disclosed the secrets of the Virgin's womb, but the Holy Spirit infused the immaculate seed into an inviolate womb. He then who sanctified another womb in order that a Prophet should be born, He it is who has opened the womb of His own mother, that the Immaculate should come forth. By the words *opening the womb,* he speaks of birth after the usual manner, not that the sacred abode of the Virgin's womb, which our Lord in entering sanctified, should now be thought by His proceeding forth from it to be deprived of its virginity. GREG. NYSS. But the offspring of this birth is alone seen to be spiritually male, as contracting no guilt from being born of a woman. Hence He is truly called holy, and therefore Gabriel, as if announcing that this commandment belonged to Him only, said, *That Holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.* Now of other first-borns the wisdom of the Gospel has declared that they are called holy from their being offered to God. But the first-born of every creature, *That Holy thing which is born, &c.* the Angel pronounces to be in the nature of its very being holy. AMBROSE. For among those that are born of a woman, the Lord Jesus alone is in every thing holy, who in the newness of His immaculate birth experienced not the contagion of earthly defilement, but by His Heavenly Majesty dispelled it. For if we follow the letter, how can every male be holy, since it is undoubted that many have been most wicked? But He is holy whom in the figure of a future mystery the pious ordinances of the divine law prefigured, because He alone was to open the hidden womb of the holy virgin Church for the begetting of nations. CYRIL. Oh the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! He offers victims, Who in each victim is honoured equally with the Father. The Truth preserves the figures of the law. He

Greg. in Hom. de occursu Domini.

Greg. ubi sup.

Cyril. Hom. xi. Rom. 11, 33.

who as God is the Maker of the law, as man has kept the law. Lev. 12, 8. Hence it follows, *And that they should give a victim as it was ordered in the law of the Lord, a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.* Bede Hom. Purif. BEDE. Now this was the victim of the poor. For the Lord commanded in the law that they who were able should offer a lamb for a son or a daughter as well as a turtledove or pigeon; but they who were not able to offer a lamb should give two turtledoves or two young pigeons. Therefore the Lord, though He was rich, deigned to become poor, that by His poverty He might make us partakers of His riches.

Cyril. ubi sup. CYRIL. But let us see what these offerings mean. The turtledove is the most vocal of birds, and the pigeon the gentlest. And such was the Saviour made unto us; He was endowed with perfect meekness, and like the turtledove entranced the world, filling [a] His garden with His own melodies. There was killed then either a turtledove or a pigeon, that by a figure He might be shewn forth unto us as about to suffer in the flesh for the life of the world. Bede ubi sup. BEDE. Or the pigeon denotes simplicity, the turtledove chastity, for the pigeon is a lover of simplicity and the turtledove of chastity, so that if by chance she has lost her mate, she heeds not to find another. Rightly then are the pigeon and turtledove offered as victims to the Lord, because the simple and chaste conversation of the faithful is a sacrifice of righteousness well-pleasing to Him. Athan. ubi sup. ATHAN. He ordered two things to be offered, because as man consists of both body and soul, the Lord requires a double return from us, chastity and meekness, not only of the body, but also of the soul. Otherwise, man will be a dissembler and hypocrite, wearing the face of innocence to mask his hidden malice. Bede ubi sup. BEDE. But while each bird, from its habit of wailing, represents the present sorrows of the saints, in this they differ, that the turtle is solitary, but the pigeon flies about in flocks, and hence the one points to the secret tears of confession, the other to the public assembling of the Church. BEDE. Or the pigeon, which flies in flocks, sets forth the busy intercourse of active life. The turtle, which delights in solitariness, tells of the lofty

[a] The word in the original is ἀμπελῶνα, "His vineyard," which St. Cyril explains, adding, "that is, us who believe on Him," and referring to Cant. ii. 12, 13: "The voice of the turtle is heard in our land, and the vines," &c.

heights of the contemplative life. But because each victim is equally accepted by the Creator, St. Luke has purposely omitted whether the turtles or young pigeons were offered for the Lord, that he might not prefer one mode of life before another, but teach that both ought to be followed.

25. And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him.

26. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

27. And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for Him after the custom of the law,

28. Then took he Him up in his arms,

AMBROSE. Not only did Angels and Prophets, the shepherds and His parents, bear witness to the birth of the Lord, but the old men and the righteous. As it is said, *And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and he was a just man, and one who feared God.* For scarcely is righteousness preserved without fear, I mean not that fear which dreads the loss of worldly goods, (which perfect love 1 John 4, 18.
casteth out,) but that holy fear of the Lord which abideth Ps. 19, 9.
for ever, by which the righteous man, the more ardent his love to God, is so much the more careful not to offend Him. AMBROSE. Well is he called righteous who sought not his own good, but the good of his nation, as it follows, *Waiting for the consolation of Israel.* GREG. NYSS. It was not surely ubi sup.
worldly happiness that the prudent Simeon was waiting for as the consolation of Israel, but a real happiness, that is, a passing over to the beauty of truth from the shadow of the law. For he had learnt from the sacred oracles that he would see the Lord's Christ before he should depart out of this present life. Hence it follows, *And the Holy Spirit was in him,* (by which indeed he was justified,) and he received an answer from the Holy Spirit. AMBROSE. He desired indeed to be loosed from the chains of bodily infirmity, bu

he waits to see the promise, for he knew, *Happy are those eyes which shall see it.* GREG. Hereby also we learn with what desire the holy men of Israel desired to see the mystery of His incarnation. BEDE. To see death means to undergo it, and happy will he be to see the death of the flesh who has first been enabled to see with the eyes of his heart the Lord Christ, having his conversation in the heavenly Jerusalem, and frequently entering the doors of God's temple, that is, following the examples of the saints in whom God dwells as in His temple. By the same grace of the Spirit whereby he foreknew Christ would come, he now acknowledges Him come, as it follows, *And he came by the Spirit into the temple.*

Greg. Mor. 7. Job 6.

ORIGEN. If thou wilt touch Jesus and grasp Him in thy hands, strive with all thy strength to have the Spirit for thy guide, and come to the temple of God. For it follows, *And when His parents brought in the child Jesus,* (i. e. Mary His mother, and Joseph His reputed father,) *to do for Him after the custom of the law, then took he Him up in his arms.* GREG. NYSS. How blessed was that holy entrance to holy things through which he hastened on to the end of life, blessed those hands which handled the word of life, and the arms which were held out to receive Him! BEDE. Now the righteous man, according to the law, received the child Jesus in his arms, that he might signify that the legal righteousness of works under the figure of the hands and arms was to be changed for the lowly indeed but saving grace of Gospel faith. The old man received the infant Christ, to convey thereby that this world, now worn out as it were with old age, should return to the childlike innocence of the Christian life.

Greg. ubi sup.

28. —— and blessed God, and said,

29. Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word:

30. For mine eyes have seen Thy salvation,

31. Which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people;

32. A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel.

ORIGEN. If we marvel to hear that a woman was healed

by touching the hem of a garment, what must we think of Simeon, who received an Infant in his arms, and rejoiced seeing that the little one he carried was He who had come to let loose the captive! Knowing that no one could release him from the chains of the body with the hope of future life, but He whom he held in his arms. Therefore it is said, *And he blessed God, saying, Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart.* THEOPHYL. When he says *Lord,* he confesses that He is the very Lord of both life and death, and so acknowledges the Child whom he held in his arms to be God. ORIGEN. As if he said, "As long as I held not Christ, I was in prison, and could not escape from my bonds." BASIL. If you examine the words of the righteous, you will find that they all sorrow over this world and its mournful delay. *Alas me!* says David, *that my habitation is prolonged.* AMBROSE. Observe then that this just man, confined as it were in the prison-house of his earthly frame, is longing to be loosed, that he may again be with Christ. But whoso would be cleansed, let him come into the temple;—into Jerusalem: let him wait for the Lord's Christ, let him receive in his hands the word of God, and embrace it as it were with the arms of his faith. Then let him depart that he might not see death who has seen life. GREEK EX. Simeon blessed God also, because the promises made to him had received their true fulfilment. For he was reckoned worthy to see with his eyes, and to carry in his arms the consolation of Israel. And therefore he says, *According to Thy word,* i. e. since I have obtained the completion of Thy promises. And now that I have seen with my eyes what was my desire to see, *now lettest Thou Thy servant depart,* neither dismayed at the taste of death, nor harassed with doubting thoughts: as he adds, *in peace.* GREG. NYSS. For since Christ has destroyed the enemy, which is sin, and has reconciled us to the Father, the removal of saints has been in peace. ORIGEN. But who departs from this world in peace, but he who is persuaded that God was in *Christ reconciling the world to Himself,* who has nothing hostile to God, having derived to himself all peace by good works in himself? GREEK EX. But it had been twice promised to him that he should not see death before he should see the Lord's Christ, and therefore he

Basil. Hom. de grat. act.

Ps. 120, 5.

Phil. 1, 23.

Photius.

Greg. ubi sup.

2 Cor. 5, 19.

ubi sup.

adds, to shew that this promise was fulfilled, *For mine eyes have seen Thy salvation.* Greg. Nyss. Blessed are the eyes, both of thy soul and thy body. For the one visibly embrace God, but the others, not considering those things which are seen, but enlightened by the brightness of the Spirit of the Lord, acknowledge the Word made flesh. For the salvation which thou hast perceived with thy eyes is Jesus Himself, by which name salvation is declared. Cyril. But Christ was the mystery which has been revealed in the last times of the world, having been prepared before the foundation of the world. Hence it follows, *which Thou hast prepared before the face of all men.* Athan. That is to say, the salvation wrought by Christ for the whole world. How then was it said above that he was watching for the consolation of Israel, but because he truly perceived in the spirit that consolation would be to Israel at that time when salvation was prepared for all people. Greek Ex. Mark the wisdom of the good and venerable old man, who before that he was thought worthy of the blessed vision, was waiting for the consolation of Israel, but when he obtained that which he was looking for, exclaims that he saw the salvation of all people. So enlightened was he by the unspeakable radiance of the Child, that he perceived at a glance things that were to happen a long time after. Theophyl. By these words, *Before the face,* he signifies that our Lord's incarnation would be visible to all men. And this salvation he says is to be the light of the Gentiles and the glory of Israel, as it follows, *A light to lighten the Gentiles.* Athan. For the Gentiles before the coming of Christ were lying in the deepest darkness, being without the knowledge of God. Cyril. But Christ coming was made a light to them that sat in darkness, being sore oppressed by the power of the devil, but they were called by God the Father to the knowledge of His Son, who is the true light. Greg. Nyss. Israel was enlightened though dimly by the law, so he says not that light came to them, but his words are, *to be the glory of Thy people Israel.* Calling to mind the ancient history, that as of old Moses after speaking with God returned with his face glorious, so they also coming to the divine light of His human nature, casting away their old veil, might be

Greg. ubi sup.

Cyril. ubi sup.

Athan. non occ.

Photius.

Athan. non occ.

Cyril. ubi sup.

Greg. ubi sup.

transformed into the same image from glory to glory. For although some of them were disobedient, yet a remnant were saved and came through Christ to glory, of which the Apostles were first-fruits, whose brightness illumines the whole world. For Christ was in a peculiar manner the glory of Israel, because according to the flesh He came forth from Israel, although as God He was over all blessed for ever. GREG. NYSS. He said therefore, *of Thy people*, signifying that not only was He adored by them, but moreover of them was He born according to the flesh. BEDE. And well is the enlightening of the Gentiles put before the glory of Israel, because when the fulness of the Gentiles shall have come in, then shall Israel be safe.

2 Cor. 3, 7.

Greg. ubi sup.

Rom. 11, 26.

33. And Joseph and His mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of Him.

34. And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary His mother, Behold, this Child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against;

35. (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.

GREEK EX. The knowledge of supernatural things, as often as it is brought to the recollection, renews the miracle in the mind, and hence it is said, *His father and mother marvelled at those things which were said of Him.* ORIGEN. Both by the angel and the multitude of the heavenly host, by the shepherds also, and Simeon. BEDE. Joseph is called the father of the Saviour, not because he was (as the Photinians say) His real father, but because from regard to the reputation of Mary, all men considered him so. AUG. He however might be called His father in that light in which he is rightly regarded as the husband of Mary, that is, not from any carnal connection, but by reason of the very bond of wedlock, a far closer relationship than that of adoption. For that Joseph was not to be called Christ's father was not, because he had not begotten Him by cohabitation, since in truth he might be a father to one whom he had

Photius.

Aug. de Con. in Evan. ii. 1.

not begotten from his wife, but had adopted from another. ORIGEN. But they who look deeper into the matter may say, that since the genealogy is deduced from David to Joseph, therefore lest Joseph should seem to be mentioned for no purpose, as not being the Father of the Saviour, he was called His father, that the genealogy might maintain ubi sup. its place. GREEK EX. Having given praise to God, Simeon now turns to bless them that brought the Child, as it follows, *And Simeon blessed them.* He gave to each a blessing, but his presage of hidden things he imparts only to the mother, in order that in the common blessing he might not deprive Joseph of the likeness of a father, but in what he says to the mother apart from Joseph he might proclaim her to be the true mother. AMBROSE. Behold what abundant grace is extended to all men by the birth of the Lord, and how prophecy is withheld from the unbelievers, not from the righteous. Simeon also prophesies that Christ Jesus has come for the fall and rising again of many. ORIGEN. They who explain this simply, may say that He came for the fall of unbelievers, and the rising again of believers.

CHRYS. As the light though it may annoy weak eyes, is still light; in like manner the Saviour endures, though many fall away, for His office is not to destroy; but their way is madness. Wherefore not only by the salvation of the good, but by the scattering of the wicked, is His power shewn. For the sun the brighter it shines, is the more trying to the Greg. non occ. weak sight. GREG. NYSS. Mark the nice distinction here observed. Salvation is said to be prepared before the face of all people, but the falling and raising is of many; for the Divine purpose was the salvation and sanctification of every one, whereas the falling and lifting up stands in the will of many, believers and unbelievers. But that those who were lying in unbelief should be raised up again is not unreasonable. ORIGEN. The careful interpreter will say, that no one falls who was not before standing. Tell me then, who were they Greg. non occ. who stood, for whose fall Christ came? GREG. NYSS. But by this he signifies a fall to the very lowest, as if the punishment before the mystery of the incarnation, fell far short of that after the giving and preaching of the Gospel dispensation. And those spoken of are chiefly of Israel, who must of

necessity forfeit their ancient privileges, and pay a heavier penalty than any other nation, because they were so unwilling to receive Him who had long been prophesied among them, had been worshipped, and had come forth from them. In a most especial manner then he threatens them with not only a fall from spiritual freedom, but also the destruction of their city, and of those who dwelt among them. But a resurrection is promised to believers, partly indeed as subject to the law, and about to be delivered from its bondage, but partly as buried together with Christ, and rising with Him. GREG. NYSS. Now from these words you may perceive through the agreement of men's minds on the word of prophecy, that one and the same God and lawgiver hath spoken both in the Prophets and the New Testament. For the language of prophecy declared that there shall be *a stone of falling, and a rock of offence, that they who believe on Him should not be confounded.* The fall therefore is to them who are offended with the meanness of His coming in the flesh; the rising again to those who acknowledge the stedfastness of the Divine purpose. ORIGEN. There is also a deeper meaning aimed against those who raise their voices against their Creator, saying, Behold the God of the Law and the Prophets of what sort He is! He says, *I kill, and I make alive.* If God then is a bloody judge and a cruel master, it is most plain that Jesus is His Son, since the same things here are written of Him, namely, that He comes for the fall and rising again of many. AMBROSE. That is, to distinguish the merits of the just and the unjust, and according to the quality of our deeds, as a true and just Judge, to decree punishment or rewards. ORIGEN. But we must take care lest by chance the Saviour should not come to some equally for the fall and rising again; for when I stood in sin, it was first good for me to fall, and die to sin. Lastly, Prophets and Saints when they were designing some great thing, used to fall on their faces, that by their fall their sins should be the more fully blotted out. This it is that the Saviour first grants to thee. Thou wert a sinner, let that which is sin fall in thee, that thou mayest thence rise again, and say, *If we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him.* CHRYS. The resurrection is a new life and conversation.

Greg. hom. de occ. Dom.

Is. 8, 14. Rom. 9, 33.

Deut. 32, 39.

2 Tim. 2, 11.

For when the sensual man becomes chaste, the covetous merciful, the cruel man gentle, a resurrection takes place. Sin being dead, righteousness rises again. It follows, *And for a sign which shall be spoken against.* Basil. (Basil. ep. 260, ad Opt.) The sign which is spoken against is called in Scripture, the cross. For Moses, it says, *made a brazen serpent, and placed it for a sign.* (Numb. 21, 8.) Greg. Nyss. (Greg. non occ.) He has joined together honour and dishonour. For to us Christians this sign is a token of honour, but it is a sign of contradiction, inasmuch by some indeed it is received as absurd and monstrous, by others with the greatest veneration. Or perhaps Christ Himself is termed a sign, as having a supernatural existence, and as the author of signs. Basil. (ubi sup.) For a sign betokens something marvellous and mysterious, which is seen indeed by the simple minded. Origen. But all the things which history relates of Christ are spoken against, not that those who believe on Him speak against Him, (for we know that all the things which are written of Him are true,) but that every thing which has been written of Him is with the unbelievers a sign which is spoken against. Greg. Nyss. (Greg. non occ.) Though these things are said of the Son, yet they have reference also to His mother, who takes each thing to herself, whether it be of danger or glory. He announces to her not only her prosperity, but her sorrows; for it follows, *And a sword shall pierce through thy own heart.* Bede. No history tells us that Mary departed this life by being slain with the sword, therefore since not the soul but the body is killed with iron, we are left to understand that sword which is mentioned, *And a sword in their lips,* (Ps. 59, 7.) that is, grief because of our Lord's passion passed through her soul, who although she saw Christ the very Son of God die a voluntary death, and doubted not that He who was begotten of her flesh would overcome death, could not without grief see Him crucified. Ambrose. Or it shews the wisdom of Mary, that she was not ignorant of the heavenly Majesty. For the word of God is living and strong, and sharper than the sharpest sword. (Heb. 4, 12.) Aug. (Aug. de Nov. ac Vet. Test. c. 73.) Or by this is signified that Mary also, through whom was performed the mystery of the incarnation, looked with doubt and astonishment at the death of her Lord, seeing the Son of God so humbled as to come down even to death. And as a sword passing close

by a man causes fear, though it does not strike him; so doubt also causes sorrow, yet does not kill; for it is not fastened to the mind, but passes through it as through a shadow.

GREG. NYSS. But it is not meant that she alone was concerned in that passion, for it is added, *that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.* The word *that* marks the event; it is not used causatively; for when all these events took place, there followed the discovery of many men's intentions. For some confessed God on the cross, others even then ceased not from their blasphemies and revilings. Or this was said, meaning that at the time of the passion the thoughts of men's hearts should be laid open, and be corrected by the resurrection. For doubts are quickly superseded by certainty. Or perhaps by revealing may be meant, the enlightening of the thoughts, as it is often used in Scripture. BEDE. But now even down to the close of the present time, the sword of the severest tribulation ceases not to go through the soul of the Church, when with bitter sorrow she experiences the evil speaking against the sign of faith, when hearing the word of God that many are raised with Christ, she finds still more falling from the faith, when at the revealing of the thoughts of many hearts, in which the good seed of the Gospel has been sown, she beholds the tares of vice overshooting it, spreading beyond it, or growing alone. ORIGEN. But the evil thoughts of men were revealed, that He who died for us might slay them; for while they were hidden, it was impossible to utterly destroy them. Hence also when we have sinned we ought to say, *Mine iniquity have I not hid.* For if we make known our sins not only to God, but to whoever can heal our wounds, our sins will be blotted out.

Greg. de occ. Dom. non occ.

Ps. 32, 5.

36. And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity;

37. And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.

38. And she coming in that instant gave thank. likewise unto the Lord, and spake of Him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

Ambrose. Simeon had prophesied, a woman united in marriage had prophesied, a virgin had prophesied, it was meet also that a widow should prophesy, that there might lack no sex or condition of life, and therefore it is said, *And there was one Anna a prophetess.* Theophyl. The Evangelist dwells some time on the account of Anna, mentioning both her father's tribe, and adding, as it were, many witnesses who knew her father and her tribe. Greg. Nyss. Or because at that time there were several others who were called by the same name, that there might be a plain way of distinguishing her, he mentions her father, and describes the quality of her parents. Ambrose. Now Anna, both from the duties of her widowhood and her manner of life, is found to be such that she is thought worthy to announce the Redeemer of the world. As it follows, *She was of a great age, and had lived with her husband, &c.* Origen. For the Holy Spirit dwelt not by chance in her. For the highest blessing, if any can possess it, is the grace of virginity, but if this cannot be, and it chance to a woman to lose her husband, let her remain a widow, which indeed not only after the death of her husband, but even while he is living, she ought to have in her mind, that supposing it should not happen, her will and determination might be crowned by the Lord, and her words should be, "This I vow, and promise, that if a certain condition of this life be mine, (which yet I wish not,) I will do nothing else but remain inviolate and a widow." Most justly then was this holy woman thought worthy to receive the gift of prophecy, because by long chastity and long fastings she had ascended to this height of virtue, as it follows, *Who departed not from the temple with fastings and prayers, &c.* Origen. From which it is plain that she possessed a multitude of other virtues; and mark how she resembles Simeon in his goodness, for they were both in the temple together, and both counted worthy of prophetic grace, as it follows,

Greg. ubi sup.

And she coming in at this very instant, gave thanks to the Lord. THEOPHYL. That is, returned thanks for seeing in Israel the Saviour of the world, and she confessed of Jesus that He was the Redeemer and the Saviour. Hence it follows, *And she spoke of Him to all, &c.* ORIGEN. But because Anna's words were nothing remarkable, and of no great note respecting Christ, the Gospel does not give the particulars of what she said, and perhaps for this reason one may suppose that Simeon anticipated her, since he indeed bore the character of the law, (for his name signifies obedience,) but she the character of grace, (which her name is by interpretation,) and Christ came between them. Therefore He let Simeon depart dying with the law, but Anna He sustains living beyond through grace.

BEDE. According to the mystical meaning, Anna signifies the Church, who at present is indeed a widow by the death of her Husband; the number also of the years of her widowhood marks the time of the Church, at which established in the body, she is separated from the Lord. For seven times twelve make eighty-four, seven indeed referring to the course of this world, which revolves in seven days; but twelve had reference to the perfection of Apostolic teaching, and therefore the Universal Church, or any faithful soul which strives to devote the whole period of its life to the following of Apostolic practice, is said to serve the Lord for eighty-four years. The term also of seven years, during which she lived with her husband, coincides. For through the prerogative of our Lord's greatness, whereby abiding in the flesh, He taught, the simple number of seven years was taken to express the sign of perfection. Anna also favours the mysteries of the Church, being by interpretation its "grace," and being both the daughter of Phanuel, who is called "the face of God," and descended from the tribe of Aser, i.e. the blessed.

39. And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth.

40. And the child grew, and waxed strong in

spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon Him.

41. Now His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover.

Bede. Luke has omitted in this place what he knew to have been sufficiently set forth by Matthew, that the Lord after this, for fear that He should be discovered and put to death by Herod, was carried by His parents into Egypt, and at Herod's death, having at length returned to Galilee, came to dwell in His own city Nazareth. For the Evangelists individually are wont to omit certain things which they either know to have been, or in the Spirit foresee will be, related by others, so that in the connected chain of their narrative, they seem as it were to have omitted nothing, whereas by examining the writings of another Evangelist, the careful reader may discover the places where the omissions have been. Thus after omitting many things, Luke says, *And when they had accomplished all things, &c.* Theophyl. Bethlehem was indeed their city, their paternal city, Nazareth the place of their abode. Aug. Perhaps it may strike you as strange that Matthew should say that His parents went with the young Child into Galilee because they were unwilling to go to Judæa for fear of Archelaus, when they seem to have gone into Galilee rather because their city was Nazareth in Galilee, as Luke in this place explains it. But we must consider, that when the Angel said in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, *Rise, and take the young child and His mother, and go into the land of Israel,* it was at first understood by Joseph as a command to go into Judæa, for so at first sight the land of Israel might have been taken to mean. But when afterwards he finds that Herod's son Archelaus was king, he was unwilling to be exposed to that danger, seeing the land of Israel might also be understood to include Galilee also as a part of it, for there also the people of Israel dwelt. Greek Ex. Or again, Luke is here describing the time before the descent to Egypt, for before her purification Joseph had not taken Mary there. But before they went down into Egypt they were not told by God to go to Nazareth, but as living

Aug. de Con. Ev. ii. 9.

Matt. 2, 20.

Metaphrastes.

more freely in their own country, thither of their own accord they went; for since the going up to Bethlehem was for no other reason but the taxing, when that was accomplished they go down to Nazareth. THEOPHYL. Now our Lord might have come forth from the womb in the stature of mature age, but this would seem like something imaginary; therefore His growth is gradual, as it follows, *And the child grew, and waxed strong.* BEDE. We must observe the distinction of words, that the Lord Jesus Christ in that He was a child, that is, had put on the condition of human weakness, was daily growing and being strengthened. ATHAN. But if as some say the flesh was changed into a Divine nature, how did it derive growth? for to attribute growth to an uncreated substance is impious. CYRIL. Rightly with the growth in age, St. Luke has united increase in wisdom, as he says, *And He was strengthened,* (i.e. in spirit). For in proportion to the measure of bodily growth, the Divine nature developed its own wisdom. THEOPHYL. For if while yet a little child, He had displayed His wisdom, He would have seemed a miracle, but together with the advance of age He gradually shewed Himself, so as to fill the whole world. For not as receiving wisdom is He said to be strengthened in spirit. For that which is most perfect in the beginning, how can that become any more perfect. Hence it follows, *Filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was in Him.* BEDE. Wisdom truly, for *in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily,* but grace, because it was in great grace given to the man Christ Jesus, that from the time He began to be man He should be perfect man and perfect God. But much rather because He was the word of God, and God needed not to be strengthened, nor was in a state of growth. But while He was yet a little child He had the grace of God, that as in Him all things were wonderful, His childhood also might be wonderful, so as to be filled with the wisdom of God. It follows, *And His parents went every year to Jerusalem, at the feast of the Passover.* CHRYS. At the feast of the Hebrews the law commanded men not only to observe the time, but the place, and so the Lord's parents wished to celebrate the feast of the Passover only at Jerusalem. AUG. But it may be asked, how did His parents go up all the years of Christ's childhood to Jerusalem,

Athan. lib. de Incarn. Christi cont. Apollin.

Col. 2, 9.

Chrys. Orat. cont. Judæos.

Aug. de Con. Ev. ii. 10.

if they were prevented from going there by fear of Archelaus? This question might be easily answered, even had some one of the Evangelists mentioned how long Archelaus reigned. For it were possible that on the feast day amid so great a crowd they might secretly come, and soon return again, at the same time that they feared to remain there on other days, so as neither to be wanting in religious duties by neglecting the feast, nor leave themselves open to detection by a constant abode there. But now since all have been silent as to the length of Archelaus' reign, it is plain that when Luke says, *They were accustomed to go up every year to Jerusalem,* we are to understand that to have been when Archelaus was no longer feared.

42. And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast.

43. And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it.

44. But they, supposing Him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought Him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance.

45. And when they found Him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him.

46. And it came to pass, that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.

47. And all that heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers.

48. And when they saw Him, they were amazed: and His mother said unto Him, Son, why hast Thou thus dealt with us? behold, Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing.

49. And He said unto them, How is it that ye sought Me? wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?

50. And they understood not the saying which He spake unto them.

CYRIL. The Evangelist having said before that the Child grew and waxed strong, verifies his own words when he relates, that Jesus with the holy Virgin went up to Jerusalem; as it is said, *And when He was twelve years old, &c.* GREEK EX. His indication of wisdom did not exceed the measure of His age, but at the time that with us the powers of discernment are generally perfected, the wisdom of Christ shews itself. AMBROSE. Or the twelfth year was the commencement of our Lord's disputation with the doctors, for this was the number of the Evangelists necessary to preach the faith. BEDE. We may also say, that as by the seventh number, so also by the twelfth, (which consists of the parts of seven multiplied alternately by one another,) the universality and perfection of either things or times is signified, and therefore rightly from the number twelve, the glory of Christ takes its beginning, being that by which all places and times are to be filled. BEDE. Now that the Lord came up every year to Jerusalem at the Passover, betokens His humility as a man, for it is man's duty to meet together to offer sacrifices to God, and conciliate Him with prayers. Accordingly the Lord as man, did among men what God by angels commanded men to do. Hence it is said, *According to the custom of the feast day.* Let us follow then the journey of His mortal life, if we delight to behold the glory of His divine nature. GREEK EX. The feast having been celebrated, while the rest returned, Jesus secretly tarried behind. As it follows, *And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and His parents knew not of it.* It is said, *When the days were accomplished,* because the feast lasted seven days. But the reason of His tarrying behind in secret was, that His parents might not be a hindrance to His carrying on the discussion with the lawyers; or perhaps to avoid appearing to despise His parents by not obeying their commands. He remains therefore secretly, that He might neither be kept away nor be disobedient. ORIGEN. But we must not wonder that they are called His parents, seeing the one from her child-

Geometer.

Bede in Hom. post Epiph.

Gal. 3, 14.

Judges 6, 20; 13, 16.

Metaphrastes vel Geometer.

birth, the other from His knowledge of it, deserved the names of father and mother. BEDE. But some one will ask, how was it that the Son of God, brought up by His parents with such care, could be left behind from forgetfulness? To which it is answered, that the custom of the children of Israel while assembling at Jerusalem on the feast days, or returning to their homes, was for the women and men to go separately, and the infants or children to go with either parent indiscriminately. And so both Mary and Joseph each thought in turn that the Child Jesus, whom they saw not with them, was returning with the other parent. Hence it follows, *But they, supposing Him to have been in the company, &c.* ORIGEN. But as when the Jews plotted against Him He escaped from the midst of them, and was not seen; so now it seems that the Child Jesus remained, and His parents knew not where He was. As it follows, *And not finding Him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking for Him.* GLOSS. They were on their way home, one day's journey from Jerusalem; on the second day they seek for Him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance, and when they found Him not, they returned on the third day to Jerusalem, and there they found Him. As it follows, *And it came to pass, after three days they found Him.* ORIGEN. He is not found as soon as sought for, for Jesus was not among His kinsfolk and relations, among those who are joined to Him in the flesh, nor in the company of the multitude can He be found. Learn where those who seek Him find Him, not every where, but in the temple. And do thou then seek Jesus in the temple of God. Seek Him in the Church, and seek Him among the masters who are in the temple. For if thou wilt so seek Him, thou shalt find Him. They found Him not among His kinsfolk, for human relations could not comprehend the Son of God; not among His acquaintance, for He passes far beyond all human knowledge and understanding. Where then do they find Him? In the temple! If at any time thou seek the Son of God, seek Him first in the temple, thither go up, and verily shalt thou find Christ, the Word, and the Wisdom, (i. e. the Son of God.) AMBROSE. After three days He is found in the temple, that it might be for a sign, that after three days of victorious suffering, He who was believed

John 10, 29.

Gloss. ordin.

to be dead should rise again, and manifest Himself to our faith, seated in heaven with divine glory. GLOSS. Or because the advent of Christ, which was looked for by the Patriarchs before the Law, was not found, nor again, that which was sought for by prophets and just men under the Law, but that alone is found which is sought for by Gentiles under grace. ORIGEN. Because moreover He was the Son of God, He is found in the midst of the doctors, enlightening and instructing them. But because He was a little child, He is found among them not teaching but asking questions, as it is said, *Sitting in the midst of the doctors, hearing them, and asking them questions.* And this He did as a duty of reverence, that He might set us an example of the proper behaviour of children, though they be wise and learned, rather to hear their masters than teach them, and not to vaunt themselves with empty boasting. But He asked not that He might learn, but that asking He might instruct. For from the same source of learning is derived both the power of asking and answering wisely, as it follows, *All who heard Him were astonished at His wisdom.* BEDE. To shew that He was a man, He humbly listened to the masters; but to prove that He was God, He divinely answered those who spake. GREEK EX. He asks questions with reason, He listens with wisdom, and answers with more wisdom, so as to cause astonishment. As it follows, *And they who saw it were astonished.* CHRYS. The Lord truly did no miracle in His childhood, yet this one fact St. Luke mentions, which made men look with wonder upon Him. BEDE. For from His tongue there went forth divine wisdom, while His age exhibited man's helplessness, and hence the Jews, amid the high things they hear and the lowly things they see, are perplexed with doubts and astonishment. But we can in no wise wonder, knowing the words of the Prophet, that thus unto us a Child is born, that He abideth the mighty God. GREEK EX. But the ever-wonderful mother of God, moved by a mother's feelings, as it were with weeping makes her mournful enquiry, in everything like a mother, with confidence, humility, and affection. As it follows, *And His mother said unto Him, Son, what hast Thou done?* ORIGEN. The holy Virgin knew that He was not the Son of Joseph, and yet calls her husband His father according to the

Gloss. ubi sup.

Metaphrastes vel Geometer.

Chrys. sup. Joh. Hom. 20.

Isa. 9, 6.

ubi sup.

belief of the Jews, who thought that He was conceived in the common way. Now to speak generally we may say, that the Holy Spirit honoured Joseph by the name of father, because he brought up the Child Jesus; but more technically, that it might not seem superfluous in St. Luke, bringing down the genealogy from David to Joseph. But why sought they Him sorrowing? Was it that He might have perished or been lost? It could not be. For what should cause them to dread the loss of Him whom they knew to be the Lord? But as whenever you read the Scriptures you search out their meaning with pains, not that you suppose them to have erred or to contain any thing incorrect, but that the truth which they have inherent in them you are anxious to find out; so they sought Jesus, lest perchance leaving them He should have returned to heaven, thither to descend when He would. He then who seeks Jesus must go about it not carelessly and idly, as many seek Him who never find Him, but with labour and sorrow.

Gloss. ordin.

Gloss. Or they feared lest Herod who sought Him in His infancy, now that He was advanced to boyhood might find an opportunity of putting Him to death.

Metaphrastes et Geometer.

Greek Ex. But the Lord Himself sets every thing at rest, and correcting as it were her saying concerning him who was His reputed father, manifests His true Father, teaching us not to walk on the ground, but to raise ourselves on high, as it follows, *And He says unto them, What is it that you ask of Me?* Bede. He blames them not that they seek Him as their son, but compels them to raise the eyes of their mind to what was rather due to Him whose eternal Son He was. Hence it follows, *Knew ye not? &c.* Ambrose. There are two generations in Christ, one from His Father, the other from His mother; the Father's more divine, the mother's that which has come down for our use and advantage. Cyril. He says this then by way of shewing that He surpasses all human standards, and hinting that the Holy Virgin was made the handmaid of the work in bringing His flesh unto the world, but that He Himself was by nature and in truth God, and the Son of the Father most high. Now from this let the followers of Valentinus, hearing that the temple was of God, be ashamed to say that the Creator, and the God of the Law and of the temple, is not also the Father of Christ.

Epiph. cont. Hær. l. ii. Hær. 31.

Epiph. Let Ebion know that at

twelve years old, not thirty, Christ is found the astonishment of all men, wonderful and mighty in the words of grace. We cannot therefore say, that after that the Spirit came to Him in Baptism He was made the Christ, that is, *anointed with divinity,* but from His very childhood He acknowledged both the temple and His Father. GREEK EX. This is the first demonstration of the wisdom and power of the Child Jesus. For as to what are called the acts [a] of His childhood, we cannot but suppose them to be the work not only of a childish but even of a devilish mind and perverse will, attempting to revile those things which are contained in the Gospel and the sacred prophecies. But should one desire to receive only such things as are generally believed, and are not contrary to our other declarations, but accord also with the words of prophecy, let it suffice that Jesus was distinguished in form above the sons of men; obedient to His mother, gentle in disposition; in appearance full of grace and dignity; eloquent in words, kind and thoughtful of the wants of others, known among all for a power and energy, as of one who was filled with all wisdom; and as in other things, so also in all human conversation, though above man, Himself the rule and measure. But that which most distinguished Him was His meekness, and that a razor had never come upon His head, nor any human hand except His mother's. But from these words we may derive a lesson; for when the Lord reproves Mary seeking Him among His relations, He most aptly points to the giving up of all fleshly ties, shewing that it is not for him to attain the goal of perfection who is still encompassed by and walks among the things of the body, and that men fall from perfection through love of their relations. BEDE. It follows, *And they understood Him not,* that is, the word which He spoke to them of His divinity. ORIG. Or they knew not whether when He said *about My Father's business,* He referred to the temple, or something higher and more edifying; for every one of us who doeth good, is the seat of God the Father; but whoso is the seat of God the Father, has Christ in the midst of him.

Geometer.

51. And He went down with them, and came to

[a] There was a spurious "Gospel of our Saviour's infancy" received by the Gnostics at the beginning of the 2nd century. Irenæus adv. Hær. i. c. 17.

Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but His mother kept all these sayings in her heart.

52. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

ubi sup. Greek Ex. All that time of the life of Christ which He passed between His manifestation in the temple and His baptism, being devoid of any great public miracles or teaching, the Evangelist sums up in one word, saying, *And He went down with them.* Origen. Jesus frequently went down with His disciples, for He is not always dwelling on the mount, for they who were troubled with various diseases were not able to ascend the mount. For this reason now also He went down to them who were below. It follows: *And He was* ubi sup. *subject to them, &c.* Greek Ex. Sometimes by His word He first institutes laws, and He afterwards confirms them by His John 10, 11. work, as when He says, *The good shepherd layeth down His life for His sheep.* For shortly after seeking our salvation He poured out His own life. But sometimes He first sets forth in Himself an example, and afterwards, as far as words can go, draws therefrom rules of life, as He does here, shewing forth by His work these three things above the rest, the love of God, honour to parents, but the preferring God also to our parents. For when He was blamed by His parents, He counts all other things of less moment than those which belong to God; again, He gives His obedience also to His parents. Bede. For what is the teacher of virtue, unless he fulfil his duty to his parents? What else did He do among us, than what He wished should be done by us? Origen. Let us then also ourselves be subject to our parents. But if our fathers are not, let us be subject to those who are our fathers. Jesus the Son of God is subject to Joseph and Mary. But I must be subject to the Bishop who has been constituted my father. It seems that Joseph knew that Jesus was greater than he, and therefore in awe moderated his authority. But let every one see, that oftentimes he who is subject is the greater. Which if they who are higher in dignity understand, they will not be elated with pride, knowing that their superior is subject

to them. GREG. NYSS. Further, since the young have not yet perfect understanding, and have need to be led forward by those who have advanced to a more perfect state; therefore when He arrived at twelve years, He is obedient to His parents, to shew that whatever is made perfect by moving forward, before that it arrives at the end profitably embraces obedience, (as leading to good). BASIL. But from His very first years being obedient to His parents He endured all bodily labours, humbly and reverently. For since His parents were honest and just, yet at the same time poor, and ill supplied with the necessaries of life (as the stable which administered to the holy birth bears witness), it is plain that they continually underwent bodily fatigue in providing for their daily wants. But Jesus being obedient to them, as the Scriptures testify, even in sustaining labours, submitted Himself to a complete subjection. AMBROSE. And can you wonder if He who is subject to His mother, also submits to His Father? Surely that subjection is a mark not of weakness but of filial duty. Let then the heretic so raise his head as to assert that He who is sent has need of other help; yet why should He need human help, in obeying His mother's authority; He was obedient to a handmaid, He was obedient to His pretended father, and do you wonder whether He obeyed God? Or is it a mark of duty to obey man, of weakness to obey God? BEDE. The Virgin, whether she understood or whether she could not yet understand, equally laid up all things in her heart for reflection and diligent examination. Hence it follows, *And His mother laid up all these things, &c.* Mark the wisest of mothers, Mary the mother of true wisdom, becomes the scholar or disciple of the Child. For she yielded to Him not as to a boy, nor as to a man, but as unto God. Further, she pondered upon both His divine words and works, so that nothing that was said or done by Him was lost upon her, but as the Word itself was before in her womb, so now she conceived the ways and words of the same, and in a manner nursed them in her heart. And while indeed she thought upon one thing at the time, another she wanted to be more clearly revealed to her; and this was her constant rule and law through her whole life. It follows, *And Jesus*

Greg. Orat. in 1 Cor. 15, 28.

Basil. in Const. Mon. 4.

increased in wisdom. THEOPHYL. Not that He became wise by making progress, but that by degrees He revealed His wisdom. As it was when He disputed with the Scribes, asking them questions of their law to the astonishment of all who heard Him. You see then how He increased in wisdom, in that He became known to many, and caused them to wonder, for the shewing forth of His wisdom is His increase. But mark how the Evangelist, having interpreted what it is to increase in wisdom, adds, *and in stature,* declaring thereby that an increase or growth in age is an increase in wisdom.

Cyril. Thess. l. x. c. 7. CYRIL. But the Eunomian Heretics say, "How can He be equal to the Father in substance, who is said to increase, as if before imperfect [b]?" But not because He is the Word, but because He is made man, He is said to receive increase. For if He really increased after that He was made flesh, as having before existed imperfect, why then do we give Him thanks as having thence become incarnate for us? But how if He is the true wisdom can He be increased, or how can He who gives grace to others be Himself advanced in grace. Again, if hearing that the Word humbled Himself, no one is offended (thinking slightingly of the true God), but rather marvels at His compassion, how is it not absurd to be offended at hearing that He increases? For as He was humbled for us, so for us He increased, that we who have fallen through sin might increase in Him. For whatever concerns us, Christ Himself has truly undertaken for us, that He might restore us to a better state. And mark what He says, not that the Word, but Jesus, increases, that you should not suppose that the pure Word increases, but the Word made flesh; and as we confess that the Word suffered in the flesh, although the flesh only suffered, because of the Word the flesh was which suffered, so He is said to increase, because the human nature of the Word increased in Him. But He is said to increase in His human nature, not as if that nature which was perfect from the beginning received increase, but that by degrees it was manifested. For the law of nature brooks

[b] Eunomius was the disciple of Aetius and flourished 360 A.D. He was the principal apologist of Arianism in its pure Anomean form, i.e. he denied not only that the Son was "of one substance" but "of like substance" with the Father. See St. Athanasius against Arianism. Lib. of the Fathers. Part I. note p. 136, et passim.

not that man should have higher faculties than the age of his body permits. The Word then (made man) was perfect, as being the power and wisdom of the Father, but because something was to be yielded to the habits of our nature, lest He should be counted strange by those who saw Him, He manifested Himself as man with a body, Amphi-
gradually advancing in growth, and was daily thought wiser lochius.
by those who saw and heard Him. GREEK EX. He increased then *in age*, His body growing to the stature of man; but in *wisdom* through those who were taught divine truths by Him; *in grace*, that is, whereby we are advanced with joy, trusting at last to obtain the promises; and this indeed *before God*, because having put on the flesh, He performed His Father's work, but *before men* by their conversion from the worship of idols to the knowledge of the Most High Trinity. THEOPHYL. He says *before God and men*, because we must first please God, then man. GREG. NYSS. The word also increases in different degrees Hom. 3.
in those who receive it; and according to the measure of in Cant.
its increase a man appears either an infant, grown up, or a perfect man.

CHAP. III.

1. Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judæa, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituræa and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene,

2. Annas and Caiaphas being the High Priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.

Greg. Hom. 20. in Ev. GREG. The time at which the forerunner of the Saviour received the word of preaching, is marked by the names of the Roman sovereign and of the princes of Judæa, as it follows: *Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judæa, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, &c.* For because John came to preach Him who was to redeem some from among the Jews, and many among the Gentiles, therefore the time of his preaching is marked out by making mention of the king of the Gentiles and the rulers of the Jews. But because all nations were to be gathered together in one, one man is described as ruling over the Roman state, as it is said, *The*
Metaphrastes. *reign of Tiberius Cæsar.* GREEK EX. For the emperor Augustus being dead, from whom the Roman sovereigns obtained the name of "Augustus," Tiberius being his successor in the monarchy, was now in the 15th year of his receiving the reins of government. ORIGEN. In the word of prophecy, spoken to the Jews alone, the Jewish kingdom
Isa. 1, 1. only is mentioned, as, *The vision of Esaias, in the days of*

Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. But in the Gospel which was to be proclaimed to the whole world, the empire of Tiberius Cæsar is mentioned, who seemed the lord of the whole world. But if the Gentiles only were to be saved, it were sufficient to make mention only of Tiberius, but because the Jews also must believe, the Jewish kingdom therefore, or Tetrarchies, are also introduced, as it follows, *Pontius Pilate being governor of Judæa, and Herod tetrarch, &c.* GREG. Because the Jews were to be scattered for their crime of treachery, the Jewish kingdom was shut up into parts under several governors. According to that saying, *Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation.* BEDE. Pilate was sent in the twelfth year of Tiberius to take the government of the Jewish nation, and remained there for ten successive years, almost until the death of Tiberius. But Herod, and Philip, and Lysanias, were the sons of that Herod in whose reign our Lord was born. Between these and Herod himself Archelaus their brother reigned ten years. He was accused by the Jews before Augustus, and perished in exile at Vienne. But in order to reduce the Jewish kingdom to greater weakness, Augustus divided it into Tetrarchies. GREG. Because John preached Him who was to be at the same time both King and Priest, Luke the Evangelist has marked the time of that preaching by the mention not only of Kings, but also of Priests. As it follows, *Under the High Priests Annas and Caiaphas.* BEDE. Both Annas and Caiaphas, when John began his preaching, were the High Priests, but Annas held the office that year, Caiaphas the same year in which our Lord suffered on the cross. Three others had held the office in the intervening time, but these two, as having particular reference to our Lord's Passion, are mentioned by the Evangelist. For at that time of violence and intrigue, the commands of the Law being no longer in force, the honour of the High Priest's office was never given to merit or high birth, but the whole affairs of the Priesthood were managed by the Roman power. For Josephus relates, that Valerius Gratus, when Annas was thrust out of the Priesthood, appointed Ismael High Priest, the son of Baphas; but not long after casting him off, he put in his place Eleazar

Greg. ubi sup

Luke 11, 17.

Greg. ubi sup.

the son of the High Priest Ananias. After the space of one year, he expelled him also from the office, and delivered the government of the High Priesthood to a certain Simon, son of Caiaphas, who holding it not longer than a year, had Joseph, whose name also was Caiaphas, for his successor; so that the whole time during which our Lord is related to have taught is included in the space of four years.

AMBROSE. The Son of God being about to gather together the Church, commences His work in His servant. And so it is well said, *The word of the Lord came to John,* that the Church should begin not from man, but from the Word. But Luke, in order to declare that John was a prophet rightly used these few words, *The word of the Lord came to him.* He adds nothing else, for they need not their own judgment who are filled with the Word of God. By saying this one thing, he has therefore declared all. But Matthew and Mark desired to shew him to be a prophet, by his raiment, his girdle, and his food. CHRYS. (Chrys. in Matt. Hom. 10.) The Word of God here mentioned was a commandment, for the son of Zacharias came not of himself, but God moved him. THEOPHYL. Through the whole of the time until his shewing himself he was hid in the wilderness, that no suspicion might arise in men's minds, that from his relation to Christ, and from his intercourse with Him from a child, he would testify such things of Him; and hence he said, *I knew Him not.* (John 1,33) GREG. NYSS. (Greg. de Virg. c. 6.) Who also entered this life at once in the spirit and power of Elias, removed from the society of men, in uninterrupted contemplation of invisible things, that he might not by becoming accustomed to the false notions forced upon us by our senses, fall into mistakes and errors in the discernment of good men. And to such a height of divine grace was he raised, that more favour was bestowed upon him than the Prophets, for from the beginning even to the end, he ever presented his heart before God pure and free from every natural passion. AMBROSE. Again, the wilderness is the Church itself, for the barren has more children than she who has an husband. The word of the Lord came, that the earth which was before barren might bring forth fruit unto us.

3. And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins;

4. As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight.

5. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight; and the rough ways shall be made smooth;

6. And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

AMBROSE. The word came, and the voice followed. For the Word first works inward, then follows the office of the voice, as it is said, *And he went into all the country about Jordan.* ORIGEN. Jordan is the same as *descending,* for there descends from God a river of healing water. But what parts would John be traversing but the country lying about Jordan, that the penitent sinner might soon arrive at the flowing stream, humbling himself to receive the baptism of repentance. For it is added, *preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.* GREG. It is plain to every reader that Greg.
John not only preached the baptism of repentance, but to ubi sup.
some also he gave it, yet his own baptism he could not give for the remission of sins. CHRYS. For as the sacrifice had not Chrys.
yet been offered up, nor had the Holy Spirit descended, how ubi sup.
could remission of sins be given? What is it then that St. Luke means by the words, *for the remission of sins,* seeing the Jews were ignorant, and knew not the weight of their sins? Because this was the cause of their evils, in order that they might be convinced of their sins and seek a Redeemer, John came exhorting them to repentance, that being thereby made better and sorrowful for their sins, they might be ready to receive pardon. Rightly then after saying, that *he came preaching the baptism of repentance,* he adds, *for the remission of sins.* As if he should say, The reason by which he persuaded them to repent was, that thereby they would the more

easily obtain subsequent pardon, believing on Christ. For if they were not led by repentance, in vain could they ask for grace, other than as a preparation for faith in Christ. GREG. (Greg. ubi sup.) Or John is said to preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, because the baptism which was to take away sin, as he could not give, he preached; just as the Incarnate Word of the Father preceded the word of preaching, so the baptism of repentance, which was able to take away sin, preceded John's baptism, which could not take away sin. AMBROSE. And therefore many say that St. John is a type of the Law, because the Law could denounce sin, but could not pardon it. GREG. NAZ. (Greg. Orat. 39.) To speak now of the difference of baptisms. Moses indeed baptized, but in the water, the cloud, and the sea, but this was done figuratively. John also baptized, not indeed according to the Jewish rite, (for he baptized not only with water,) but also for the remission of sins, yet not altogether spiritually, (for he adds not, *in the Spirit*). Jesus baptizes but with the Spirit, and this is perfect baptism. There is also a fourth baptism, namely by martyrdom and blood, by which also Christ Himself was baptized, and which is so far more glorious than the others, as it is not sullied by repeated acts of defilement. There is also a fifth, the most weary, according to which David every night washed his bed and his couch with tears. It follows, *As it is written in the book of Esaias the Prophet, The voice of one crying in the wilderness.* (Isa. 40, 3.) AMBROSE. John the forerunner of the Word is rightly called the voice, because the voice being inferior precedes, the Word, which is more excellent, follows. GREG. (Greg. 7, 20. in Ev.) John cries in the desert because he brings the glad tidings of redemption to deserted and forsaken Judæa, but what he cries is explained in the words, *Prepare ye the way of the Lord.* For they who preach true faith and good works, what else do they than prepare the way for the Lord's coming into the hearts of the hearers, that they might make the paths of God straight, forming pure thoughts in the mind by the word of good preaching. ORIGEN. Or, a way must be prepared in our heart for the Lord, for the heart of man is large and spacious if it has become clean. For imagine not that in the size of the body, but in the virtue of the understanding, consists that greatness which must receive the knowledge of the

truth. Prepare then in thy heart by good conversation a way for the Lord, and by perfect works pursue the path of life, that so the word of God may have free course in thee. BASIL. And because a path is a way trodden down by those that have gone before, and which former men have worn away, the word bids those who depart from the zeal of their predecessors repeatedly pursue it. CHRYS. But to cry, *Prepare ye the way of the Lord,* was not the office of the king, but of the forerunner. And so they called John the voice, because he was the forerunner of the Word.

Basil. non occ.

Chrys. ubi sup.

CYRIL. But suppose some one should answer, saying, How shall we prepare the way of the Lord, or how shall we make His paths straight? since so many are the hindrances to those who wish to lead an honest life. To this the word of prophecy replies, There are some ways and paths by no means easy to travel, being in some places hilly and rugged, in others steep and precipitous; to remove which it says, *Every valley shall be filled, every mountain and hill shall be brought low.* Some roads are most unequally constructed, and while in one part rising, in another sloping downwards, are very difficult to pass. And here he adds, *And the crooked ways shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth.* But this was in a spiritual manner brought to pass by the power of our Saviour. For formerly to pursue an Evangelical course of life was a difficult task, for men's minds were so immersed in worldly pleasures. But now that God being made Man, has condemned sin in the flesh, all things are made plain, and the way of going has become easy, and neither hill nor valley is an obstacle to those who wish to advance. ORIGEN. For when Jesus had come and sent His Spirit, every valley was filled with good works, and the fruits of the Holy Spirit, which if thou hast, thou wilt not only cease to become a valley, but will begin also to be a mountain of God. GREG. NYSS. Or by the valleys he means a quiet habitual practice of virtue, as in the Psalms, *The valleys shall be filled with corn.* CHRYS. He denounces the haughty and arrogant by the name of mountains, whom Christ has brought low. But by the hills He implies the reckless, not only because of the pride of their hearts, but because of the barrenness of

Cyril. in Esai. 40. lib. 3.

Greg. ubi sup.

Ps. 65, 13.

Chrys. ubi sup.

despair. For the hill produces no fruit. ORIGEN. Or you may understand the mountains and hills to be the hostile powers, which have been overthrown by the coming of Christ. BASIL. But as the hills differ from mountains in respect of height, in other things are the same, so also the adverse powers agree indeed in purpose, but are distinguished from one another in the enormity of their offences. GREG. Or, the valley when filled increases, but the mountains and hills when brought low decrease, because the Gentiles by faith in Christ receive fulness of grace, but the Jews by their sin of treachery have lost that wherein they boasted. For the humble receive a gift because the hearts of the proud they keep afar off. CHRYS. Or by these words he declares the difficulties of the law to be turned into the easiness of faith; as if he said, No more toils and labours await us, but grace and remission of sins make an easy way to salvation. GREG. NYSS. Or, He orders the valleys to be filled, the mountains and hills to be cast down, to shew that the rule of virtue neither fails from want of good, nor transgresses from excess. GREG. But the crooked places are become straight, when the hearts of the wicked, perverted by a course of injustice, are directed to the rule of justice. But the rough ways are changed to smooth, when fierce and savage dispositions by the influence of Divine grace return to gentleness and meekness. CHRYS. He then adds the cause of these things, saying, *And all flesh shall see, &c.* shewing that the virtue and knowledge of the Gospel shall be extended even to the end of the world, turning mankind from savage manners and perverse wills to meekness and gentleness. Not only Jewish converts but all mankind shall see the salvation of God. CYRIL. That is, of the Father, who sent His Son as our Saviour. But the flesh is here taken for the whole man. GREG. Or else, All flesh, i. e. Every man cannot see the salvation of God in Christ in this life. The Prophet therefore stretches his eye beyond to the last day of judgment, when all men, both the elect and the reprobate, shall equally see Him.

Basil. non occ. — Greg. 20. in Ev. — Chrys. in Matt. Hom. 10. — Greg. ubi sup. — Greg. ubi sup. — Chrys. ubi sup. — Cyril. ubi sup. — Greg. ubi sup.

7. Then said He to the multitude that came forth

to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

8. Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

9. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

ORIGEN. No one that remains in his old state, and forsakes not his old habits and practices, can rightly come to be baptized; whoever then wishes to be baptized, let him *go forth.* Hence are those words significantly spoken, *And he said unto the multitude that went forth to be baptized of him.* To the multitudes then who are going forth to the laver of baptism, he speaks the following words, for if they had already gone forth, he would not have said, *O generation of vipers.* CHRYS. The dweller in the wilderness, when he saw all the people of Palestine standing round him and wondering, bent not beneath the weight of such respect, but rose up against them and reproved them. The holy Scripture often gives the names of wild beasts to men, according to the passions which excite them, calling them sometimes dogs because of their impudence, horses on account of their lust, asses for their folly, lions and panthers for their ravening and wantonness, asps for their guile, serpents and vipers for their poison and cunning; and so in this place John calls the Jews a *generation of vipers.*

(Chrys. Hom. in Matt. 10. Hom. in Gen. 12.)

BASIL. Now it may be observed, that the following words *natus* and *filius* are spoken of animals, but *genimen* may be said of the fœtus before it is formed in the womb; the fruit of the palm-trees is also called *genimina,* but that word is very seldom used with respect to animals, and when it is, always in a bad sense. CHRYS. Now they say that the female viper kills the male in copulation, and the fœtus as it increases in the womb kills the mother, and so comes forth into life, bursting open the womb in revenge as it were

(Basil. cont. Eunom. lib. 2. Chrys. Hom. in Matt. 11.)

of its father's death; the viper progeny therefore are parricides. Such also were the Jews, who killed their spiritual fathers and teachers. But what if he found them not sinning, but beginning to be converted? He ought not surely to rebuke them, but to comfort them. We answer, that he gave not heed to those things which are outward, for he knew the secrets of their hearts, the Lord revealing them to him; for they vaunted themselves too much in their forefathers. Cutting therefore at this root, he calls them a *generation of vipers*, not indeed that he blamed the Patriarchs, or called them vipers. GREG. Because the Jews hated good men, and persecuted them, following the steps of their carnal parents, they are by birth the poisonous sons, as it were, of poisonous or sorcerous parents. But because the preceding verse declares that at the last judgment Christ shall be seen by all flesh, it is rightly added, *Who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?* The wrath to come being the awarding of final punishment. AMBROSE. We see these men through the compassion of God, inspired with prudence to seek repentance of their crimes, dreading with wise devotion the terror of the judgment to come. Or perhaps, according to the precept, *Be ye wise as serpents*, they are shewn to have a natural prudence, who perceive what is coming, and earnestly desire help, though they still forsake not what is hurtful. GREG. But because he cannot then flee from the wrath of God, who now has not recourse to the sorrows of repentance, it is added, *Bring forth therefore fruits.* CHRYS. For it is not sufficient for the penitent to leave off his sins, he must also bring forth the fruits of repentance, as it is in the Psalms, *depart from evil and do good*, just as in order to heal, it will not do to pluck out the arrow only, but we must also apply a salve to the womb. But he says not fruit, but *fruits*, signifying abundance. GREG. He warns them that they must bring forth not only the fruits of repentance, but fruits worthy of repentance. For he that has violated no law, to him it is permitted to use what is lawful, but if a man has fallen into sin, he ought so to cut himself off from what is lawful, as he remembers to have committed what is unlawful. For the fruit of good works ought not to be equal in the man who has sinned less, and the man who has sinned more, nor in him who has

Greg. in Hom. 20, in Ev.

Matt. 10, 16.

Greg. ubi sup.

Chrys. ubi sup.

Ps. 34, 14.

Greg. ubi sup.

fallen into no crimes, and him who has fallen into some. In this way it is adapted to the conscience of each man, that they should seek for so much the greater blessing on good works through repentance, as they have by guilt brought on themselves the heavier penalties. MAXIMUS. The fruit of repentance is an equanimity of soul, which we do not fully obtain, as long as we are at times affected by our passions, for not as yet have we performed the fruits worthy of repentance. Let us then repent truly, that being delivered from our passions we may obtain the pardon of their sins. GREG. But the Jews glorying in their noble birth were unwilling to acknowledge themselves sinners, because they were descended from the stock of Abraham. So then it is rightly said, *And begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham for our father.* CHRYS. Not meaning thereby that they had not descended in their natural course from Abraham, but that it avails them nothing to have Abraham for their father, unless they observed the relationship in respect of virtue. For Scripture is accustomed to entitle laws of relationship, such as do not exist by nature, but are derived from virtue or vice. To whichsoever of these two a man conforms himself, he is called its son or brother. CYRIL. For what profits the nobleness we inherit through the flesh, unless it be supported by kindred feelings in us? It is folly then to boast of our worthy ancestors, and fall away from their virtues. BASIL. For neither does the speed of its sire make the horse swift; but as the goodness of other animals is looked for in individuals, so also that is reckoned to be man's legitimate praise which is decided by the test of his present worth. For it is a disgraceful thing for a man to be adorned with the honours of another, when he has no virtue of his own to commend him. GREG. NYSS. So then having foretold the casting away of the Jews, He goes on to allude to the calling of the Gentiles, whom He calls *stones.* Hence it follows, *For I say unto you, &c.* CHRYS. As if he said, Think not that if you perish the Patriarch will be deprived of sons, for God even from stones can produce men unto him, and prolong the line of his descendants. For so has it been from the beginning, seeing that for men to be made from stones unto Abraham is but equivalent to the coming forth of a son from

Max. lib. Ascet.

Greg. ubi sup.

Chrys. ubi sup.

Basil. non occ.

Greg. non occ.

Chrys. ubi sup.

the dead womb of Sarah. AMBROSE. But although God can alter and change the most diverse natures, yet in my mind a mystery is of more avail than a miracle. For what else than stones were they who bowed down to stones, like indeed to them who made them. It is prophesied therefore that faith shall be poured into the stony hearts of the Gentiles, and through faith the oracles promise that Abraham shall have sons. But that you may know who are the men compared to stones, he has also compared men to trees, adding, *For now the axe is laid to the root of the tree.* This change of figure was made, that by means of comparison might be understood to have now commenced a more kindly growth of manhood. ORIGEN. If the completion of all things had been then already begun, and the end of time close at hand, I should have no question but that the prophecy was given, because at that time it was to be fulfilled. But now that many ages have elapsed since the Spirit spoke this, I think it was prophesied to the people of Israel, because their cutting off was approaching. For to those that went out to him that they should be baptized, he gave this warning among others. CYRIL. By the axe then he declares the deadly wrath of God, which fell upon the Jews on account of the impieties they practised against Christ; he does not pronounce the axe to be yet fixed to the root, but that it was laid (ad radicem), i. e. near the root. For though the branches were cut down, the tree itself was not yet entirely destroyed. For a remnant of Israel shall be saved. GREG. Or we may take it in this way; The tree represents the whole human race in this world, but the axe is our redeemer, who by the handle and iron, as it were, is held indeed in the hand of man, but strikes by the power of God. Which axe indeed is now laid at the root of the tree; for although it waits patiently, yet it is plain what it is about to do. And we must observe that the said axe is to be laid not at the branches, but at the root. For when the children of the wicked are taken away, what is this but the cutting off of the branches of an unfruitful tree? But when the whole family together with the parent is removed, the unfruitful tree is cut off from the very root. But every hardened sinner finds the fire of hell the quicker

Greg. ubi sup.

prepared for him, as he disdains to bring forth the fruits of good works. Hence it follows, *Every one then.* CHRYS. It is elegantly said, *that beareth not fruit,* and it is added, *good.* For God created man an animal fond of employment, and constant activity is natural to him, but idleness is unnatural. For idleness is hurtful to every member of the body, but much more to the soul. For the soul being by nature in constant motion does not admit of being slothful. But as idleness is an evil, so also is an unworthy activity. But having before spoken of repentance, he now declares that the axe lies near, not indeed actually cutting, but only striking terror. AMBROSE. Let him then that is able *bring forth fruit* unto grace, him who ought, unto repentance. The Lord is at hand seeking for His fruit, who shall cherish the fruitful, but rebuke the barren.

10. And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then?

11. He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise.

12. Then came also Publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do?

13. And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you.

14. And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages.

GREG. In the preceding words of John, it is plain that Greg. ubi sup.
the hearts of his hearers were troubled, and sought for advice from him. As it is added, *And they asked him, saying,* &c. ORIGEN. Three classes of men are introduced as enquiring of John concerning their salvation, one which the Scripture calls *the multitude,* another to which it gives the name of *Publicans,* and a third which is noticed by the appellation of *soldiers.* THEOPHYL. Now to the Publicans and soldiers he gives a commandment to abstain from evil,

but the multitudes, as not living in an evil condition, he commands to perform some good work, as it follows, *He that hath two coats, let him give one.* GREG. Because a coat is more necessary for our use than a cloak, it belongs to the bringing forth of fruits worthy of repentance, that we should divide with our neighbours not only our superfluities, but those which are absolutely necessary to us, as our coat, or the meat with which we support our bodies; and hence it follows, *And he who has meat, let him do likewise.* BASIL. But we are hereby taught, that every thing we have over and above what is necessary to our daily support, we are bound to give to him who hath nothing for God's sake, who hath given us liberally whatever we possess.

Greg. ubi sup.

GREG. For because it was written in the law, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,* he is proved to love his neighbour less than himself, who does not share with him in his distress, those things which are even necessary to himself. Therefore that precept is given of dividing with one's neighbour the two coats, since if one is divided no one is clothed. But we must remark in this, of how much value are works of mercy, since of the works worthy of repentance these are enjoined before all others. AMBROSE. For other commands of duty have reference only to individuals, mercy has a common application. It is therefore a common commandment to all, *to contribute to him that has not.* Mercy is the fulness of virtues, yet in mercy itself a proportion is observed to meet the capacities of man's condition, in that each individual is not to deprive himself of all, but what he has to share it with the poor.

Greg. ubi sup.

ORIGEN. But this place admits of a deeper meaning, for as we ought not to serve two masters, so neither to have two coats, lest one should be the clothing of the old man, the other of the new, but we ought to cast off the old man, and give to him who is naked. For one man has one coat, another has none at all, the strength therefore of the two is exactly contrary, and as it has been written that we should cast all our crimes to the bottom of the sea, so ought we to throw from us our vices and errors, and lay them upon him who has been the cause of them. THEOPHYL. But some one has observed that the two coats are the spirit and letter of

Scripture, but John advises him that hath these two to instruct the ignorant, and give him at least the letter.

BEDE. What great virtue there was in the discourse of the Baptist is manifested by this, that the Publicans, nay even the soldiers, he compelled to seek counsel of him concerning their salvation, as it follows, *But the Publicans came.* CHRYS. Great is the force of virtue that makes the rich seek the way of salvation from the poor, from him that hath nothing. BEDE. He commands them therefore that they exact no more than what was presented to them, as it follows, *And he said unto them, Do no more than what is appointed to you.* But they are called publicans who collect the public taxes, or who are the farmers of the public revenue or public property. Those also who pursue the gain of this world by traffic are denoted by the same titles, all of whom, each in his own sphere, he equally forbids to practise deceit, that so by first keeping themselves from desiring other men's goods, they might at length come to share their own with their neighbours. It follows, *But the soldiers also asked him.* In the justest manner he advises them not to seek gain by falsely accusing those whom they ought to benefit by their protection. Hence it follows, *And he says unto them, Strike no one,* (i.e. violently,) *nor accuse any falsely,* (i.e. by unjustly using arms,) *and be content with your wages.* AMBROSE. Teaching thereby that wages were affixed to military duty, lest men seeking for gain should go about as robbers. GREG. NAZ. For by wages he refers to the imperial pay, and the rewards assigned to distinguished actions. AUG. For he knew that soldiers, when they use their arms, are not homicides, but the ministers of the law; not the avengers of their own injuries, but the defenders of the public safety. Otherwise he might have answered, "Put away your arms, abandon warfare, strike no one, wound no one, destroy no one." For what is it that is blamed in war? Is it that men die, who some time or other must die, that the conquerors might rule in peace? To blame this is the part of timid not religious men. The desire of injury, the cruelty of revenge, a savage and pitiless disposition, the fierceness of rebellion, the lust of power, and such like things are the evils which are justly blamed in wars, which

Chrys. Hom. in Matt. 24.

Greg. Orat. 19. Aug. con Faust. lib. xxii. c. 74

generally for the sake of thereby bringing punishment upon the violence of those who resist, are undertaken and carried on by good men either by command of God or some lawful authority, when they find themselves in that order of things in which their very condition justly obliges them either to command such a thing themselves, or to obey when others command it. CHRYS. But John's desire when he spoke to the Publicans and soldiers, was to bring them over to a higher wisdom, for which as they were not fitted, he reveals to them commoner truths, lest if he put forward the higher they should pay no attention thereto, and be deprived of the others also.

Chrys. Hom. in Matt. 11.

15. And as the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not;

16. John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.

17. Whose fan is in His hand, and He will throughly purge His floor, and will gather the wheat into His garner; but the chaff He will burn with fire unquenchable.

ORIGEN. It was meet that more deference should be paid to John than to other men, for he lived such as no other man. Wherefore indeed most rightly did they regard him with affection, only they kept not within due bounds; hence it is said, *But while the people were expecting whether he were the Christ.* AMBROSE. Now what could be more absurd than that he who was fancied to be in another should not be believed in his own person? He whom they thought to have come by a woman, is not believed to have come by a virgin; while in fact the sign of the Divine coming was placed in the childbearing of a virgin, not of a woman. ORIGEN. But love is dangerous when it is uncontrolled. For he who loves any one ought to consider the nature and causes of loving, and not to love more than the object de-

serves. For if he pass the due measure and bounds of love, both he who loves, and he who is loved, will be in sin. GREEK EX. And hence John gloried not in the estimation in which all held him, nor in any way seemed to desire the deference of others, but embraced the lowest humility. Hence it follows, *John answered.* BEDE. But how could he answer them who in secret thought that he was Christ, except it was that they not only thought, but also (as another Evangelist declares) sending Priests and Levites to him asked him whether he was the Christ or not?

Meta-phrastes.

AMBROSE. Or: John saw into the secrets of the heart; but let us remember by whose grace, for it is of the gift of God to reveal things to man, not of the virtue of man, which is assisted by the Divine blessing, rather than capable of perceiving by any natural power of its own. But quickly answering them, he proved that he was not the Christ, for his works were by visible operations. For as man is compounded of two natures, i.e. soul and body, the visible mystery is made holy by the visible, the invisible by the invisible; for by water the body is washed, by the Spirit the soul is cleansed of its stains. It is permitted to us also in the very water to have the sanctifying influence of the Deity breathed upon us. And therefore there was one baptism of repentance, another of grace. The latter was by both water and Spirit, the former by one only; the work of man is to bring forth repentance for his sin, it is the gift of God to pour in the grace of His mystery. Devoid therefore of all envy of Christ's greatness, he declared not by word but by work that he was not the Christ. Hence it follows, *There cometh after me one mightier than I.* In those words, *mightier than I*, he makes no comparison, for there can be none between the Son of God and man, but because there are many mighty, no one is mightier but Christ. So far indeed was he from making comparison, that he adds, *Whose shoes' latchet I am not worthy to unloose.* AUG. Matthew says, *Whose shoes I am not worthy to bear.* If therefore it is worth while to understand any difference in these expressions, we can only suppose that John said one at one time, another at another, or both together, *To bear his shoes, and to loose the latchet of His shoes*, so that though one Evangelist may have related this, the others that, yet all

Aug. de Cons. Evang. lib. ii. 12.

have related the truth. But if John intended no more when he spoke of the shoes of our Lord but His excellence and his own humility, whether he said *loosing the latchet of the shoes, or bearing them,* they have still kept the same sense who by the mention of shoes have in their own words expressed the same signification of humility. AMBROSE. By the words, *Whose shoes I am not worthy to bear,* he shews that the grace of preaching the Gospel was conferred upon the Apostles, who were shod for the Gospel. He seems however to say it, because John frequently represented the Jewish people. GREG. But John denounces himself as unworthy to loose the latchet of Christ's shoes: as if he openly said, I am not able to disclose the footsteps of my Redeemer, who do not presume unworthily to take unto myself the name of bridegroom, for it was an ancient custom that[a] when a man refused to take to wife her whom he ought, whoever should come to her betrothed by right of kin, was to loose his shoe. Or because shoes are made from the skins of dead animals, our Lord being made flesh appeared as it were with shoes, as taking upon Himself the carcase of our corruption. The latchet of the shoe is the connection of the mystery. John therefore cannot loose the latchet of the shoe, because neither is he able to fathom the mystery of the Incarnation, though he acknowledged it by the Spirit of prophecy.

Eph. 6, 15.

Greg. Hom. 7. in Evan.

Chrys. ubi sup.

CHRYS. And having said that his own baptism was only with water, he next shews the excellence of that baptism which was brought by Christ, adding, *He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit, and fire,* signifying by the very metaphor which he uses the abundance of grace. For he says not, "He shall give you the Holy Spirit," but *He shall baptize you.* And again, by the addition of fire, he shews the power of grace. And as Christ calls the grace of the Spirit, *water,* meaning by water the purity resulting from it, and the abundant consolation which is brought to minds which are capable of receiving Him; so also John, by the word

John 4, 14; 7, 38.

[a] St. Gregory seems to refer here to Ruth 4, 8. Vulg. "Dixit proximo suo Booz. Tolle calceamentum quod statim solvit de pede suo." He quotes also John 3, 29: He that hath the bride is the bridegroom, but the friend &c. See the same allegory in Aug. de Nat. S. Joann. Bap. Hom. iv. Ambrose in loc.; Cyprian ii. adv. Jud. 19.

fire, expresses the fervour and uprightness of grace, as well as the consuming of sins.

BEDE. The Holy Spirit also may be understood by the word fire, for He kindles with love and enlightens with wisdom the hearts which He fills. Hence also the Apostles received the baptism of the Spirit in the appearance of fire. There are some who explain it, that now we are baptized with the Spirit, hereafter we shall be with fire, that as in truth we are now born again to the remission of our sins by water and the Spirit, so then we shall be cleansed from certain lighter sins by the baptism of purifying fire. ORIGEN. And as John was waiting by the river Jordan for those who came to his baptism, and some he drove away, saying, *Generation of vipers*, but those who confessed their sins he received, so shall the Lord Jesus stand in the fiery stream with the flaming sword, that whoever after the close of this life desires to pass over to Paradise and needs purification, He may baptize him with this laver, and pass him over to paradise, but whoso has not the seal of the former baptisms, him He shall not baptize with the laver of fire.

BASIL. But because he says, *He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit*, let no one admit that baptism to be valid in which the name of His Spirit only has been invoked, for we must ever keep undiminished that tradition which has been sealed to us in quickening grace. To add or take away aught thereof excludes from eternal life. GREEK EX. By these words then, *He shall baptize with the Holy Spirit*, He signifies the abundance of His grace, the plenteousness of His mercy; but lest any should suppose that while to bestow abundantly is both in the power and will of the Creator, He will have no occasion to punish the disobedient, he adds, *whose fan is in His hand*, shewing that He is not only the rewarder of the righteous, but the avenger of them that speak lies. But the fan expresses the promptitude of His judgment. For not with the process of passing sentence on trial, but in an instant and without any interval He separates those that are to be condemned from the company of those that are to be saved. CYRIL. By the following words, *And He shall thoroughly purge His floor*, the Baptist signifies that the Church belongs to Christ as her Lord. BEDE. For by

Basil. lib de Spir. Sanct. c. 12.

ubi sup.

Chrys. in Thes. ib. ii. c. 4.

the floor is represented the present Church, in which many are called, but few are chosen. The purging of which floor is even now carried on individually, when every perverse offender is either cast out of the Church for his open sins, (by the hands of the Priesthood,) or for his secret sins is after death condemned by Divine judgment. And at the end of the world it will be accomplished universally, when the Son of Man shall send His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom every thing that has offended. AMBROSE. By the sign of a fan then the Lord is declared to possess the power of discerning merits, since when the corn is winnowed in the threshing floor, the full ears are separated from the empty by the trial of the wind blowing them. Hence it follows, *And He shall gather the wheat into His barn.* By this comparison, the Lord shews that on the day of judgment He will discern the solid merits and fruits of virtue from the unfruitful lightness of empty boasting and vain deeds, about to place the men of more perfect righteousness in His heavenly mansion. For that is indeed the more perfect fruit which was thought worthy to be like to Him who fell as a grain of wheat, that He might bring forth fruit in abundance. (John 12, 24.)

CYRIL. But the chaff signifies the trifling and empty, blown about and liable to be carried away by every blast of sin. BASIL. (Basil. non occ.) But they are mixed up with those who are worthy of the kingdom of heaven, as the chaff with the wheat. This is not however from consideration of their love of God and their neighbour, nor from their spiritual gifts or temporal blessings.

ORIGEN. Or, because without the wind the wheat and chaff cannot be separated, therefore He has the fan in His hand, which shews some to be chaff, some wheat; for when you were as the light chaff, (i.e. unbelieving,) temptation shewed you to be what you knew not; but when you shall bravely endure temptation, the temptation will not make you faithful and enduring, but it will bring to light the virtue which was hid in you.

(Greg. non occ.) GREG. NYSS. But it is well to know, that the treasures, which according to the promises are laid up for those who live honestly, are such as the words of man cannot express,

as eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive. And the punishments which await sinners bear no proportion to any of those things which now affect the senses. And although some of those punishments are called by our names, yet their difference is very great. For when you hear of *fire*, you are taught to understand something else from the expression which follows, *that is not quenched*, beyond what comes into the idea of other fire. GREG. The fire of hell is here wonderfully expressed, for our earthly fire is kept up by heaping wood upon it, and cannot live unless supplied with fuel, but on the contrary the fire of hell, though a bodily fire, and burning bodily the wicked who are put into it, is not kept up by wood, but once made remains unquenchable. Greg. Mor. 15. sup. Job 20.

18. And many other things in his exhortation preached he unto the people.

19. But Herod the tetrarch, being reproved by him for Herodias his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done,

20. Added yet this above all, that he shut up John in prison.

ORIGEN. John having announced the coming of Christ, was preaching the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and the other things which the Gospel history has handed down to us. But besides these he is declared to have announced others in the following words. *And many other things in his exhortation preached he unto the people.* THEOPHYL. For his exhortation was the telling of good things, and therefore is fitly called the Gospel. ORIGEN. And as in the Gospel according to St. John it is related of Christ that He spoke many other things, so also in this place we must understand Luke to say the same of John the Baptist, since certain things are announced by John too great to be entrusted to writing. But we marvel at John, because among them that are born of women there was not a greater than he, for by his good deeds he had been exalted to so high a fame for virtue, that by many he was supposed to be Christ. But what is much more marvellous he feared not Herod, nor

dreaded death, as it follows, *But Herod the tetrarch being reproved by him.* Euseb. non occ. EUSEB. He is called the tetrarch, to distinguish him from the other Herod, in whose reign Christ was born, and who was king, but this Herod was tetrarch. Now his wife was the daughter of Aretas king of Arabia, but he had sacrilegiously married his brother Philip's wife, though she had offspring by his brother. For those only were allowed to do this whose brothers died without issue. For this the Baptist had censured Herod. First indeed he heard him attentively, for he knew that his words were weighty and full of consolation, but the desire of Herodias compelled him to despise the words of John, and he then thrust him into prison. And so it follows, *And he added this above all, that he shut up John in prison.* BEDE. But John was not imprisoned in those days. According to St. John's Gospel it was not till after some miracles had been performed by our Lord, and after His baptism had been noised abroad; but according to Luke he had been seized beforehand by the redoubled malice of Herod, who, when he saw so many flock to the preaching of John, and the soldiers believing, the Publicans repenting, and whole multitudes receiving baptism, on the contrary not only despised John, but having put him in prison, slew him. Gloss. ordin. GLOSS. For before that Luke relates any of the acts of Jesus, he says that John was taken by Herod, to shew that he alone was in an especial manner going to describe those of our Lord's acts, which were performed since the year in which John was taken or put to death.

21. Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened,

22. And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art My beloved Son; in Thee I am well pleased.

AMBROSE. In a matter which has been related by others, Luke has rightly given us only a summary, and has left more to be understood than expressed in the fact that our Lord was baptized by John. As it is said, *Now when all*

were baptized, it came to pass. Our Lord was baptized not that He might be cleansed by the waters but to cleanse them, that being purified by the flesh of Christ who knew no sin, they might possess the power of baptism. GREG. NAZ. Christ comes also to baptism perhaps to sanctify baptism, but doubtless to bury the old Adam in water. AMBROSE. But the cause of our Lord's baptism He Himself declares when He says, *Thus it becomes us to fulfil all righteousness.* But what is righteousness, except that what you would have another do to you, you should first begin yourself, and so by your example encourage others? Let none then avoid the laver of grace, since Christ avoided not the laver of repentance. CHRYS. Now there was a Jewish baptism which removed the pollutions of the flesh, not the guilt of the conscience; but our baptism parts us from sin, washes the soul, and gives us largely the outpouring of the Spirit. But John's baptism was more excellent than the Jewish; for it did not bring men to the observance of bodily purifications, but taught them to turn from sin to virtue. But it was inferior to our baptism, in that it conveyed not the Holy Spirit, nor shewed forth the remission which is by grace, for there was a certain end as it were of each baptism. But neither by the Jewish nor our own baptism was Christ baptized, for He needed not the pardon of sins, nor was that flesh destitute of the Holy Spirit which from the very beginning was conceived by the Holy Spirit; He was baptized by the baptism of John, that from the very nature of the baptism, you might know that He was not baptized because He needed the gift of the Spirit. But he says, *being baptized and praying,* that you might consider how fitting to one who has received baptism is constant prayer. BEDE. Because though all sins are forgiven in baptism, not as yet is the weakness of this fleshly substance made strong. For we rejoice at the overwhelming of the Egyptians having now crossed the Red sea, but in the wilderness of worldly living there meet us other foes, who, the grace of Christ directing us, may by our exertions be subdued until we come to our own country. CHRYS. But he says, *The heavens opened,* as if till then they had been shut. But now the higher and the lower sheep-fold being brought into one, and there being

Greg. in Orat. 39.

one Shepherd of the sheep, the heavens opened, and man was incorporated a fellow-citizen with the Angels. BEDE. For not then were the heavens opened to Him whose eyes scanned the innermost parts of the heaven, but therein is shewn the virtue of baptism, that when a man comes forth from it the gates of the heavenly kingdom are opened to him, and while his flesh is bathed unharmed in the cold waters, which formerly dreaded their hurtful touch, the flaming sword is extinguished. CHRYS. The Holy Spirit descended also upon Christ as upon the Founder of our race, that He might be in Christ first of all who received Him not for Himself, but rather for us. Hence it follows: *And the Holy Spirit descended.* Let not any one imagine that He received Him because He had Him not. For He as God sent Him from above, and as man received Him below. Therefore from Him the Spirit fled down to Him, i.e. from His deity to His humanity. AUG. But it is most strange that He should receive the Spirit when He was thirty years old. But as without sin He came to baptism, so not without the Holy Spirit. For if it was written of John, *He shall be filled with the Spirit from his mother's womb,* what must we believe of the man Christ, the very conception of whose flesh was not carnal but spiritual. Therefore He condescended now to prefigure His body, i.e. the Church, in which the baptized especially receive the Holy Spirit. CHRYS. That baptism savoured partly of antiquity, partly of novelty. For that He should receive baptism from a Prophet shewed antiquity, but the Spirit's descent denoted something new. AMBROSE. Now the Spirit rightly shewed Himself in the form of a dove, for He is not seen in His divine substance. Let us consider the mystery why like a dove? Because the grace of baptism requires innocence, that we should be innocent as doves. The grace of baptism requires peace, which under the emblem of an olive-branch the dove once brought to that ark which alone escaped the deluge. CHRYS. Or to shew the meekness of the Lord, the Spirit now appears in the form of a dove, but at Pentecost like fire, to signify punishment. For when he was about to pardon offences, gentleness was necessary; but having obtained grace, there remaineth for us the time of trial and judgment.

Luke 1, 15.

CYPRIAN. Now the dove is a harmless and pleasant creature, with no bitterness of gall, no fierceness of bite, no violence of rending talons; they love the abodes of men, consort within one home, when they have young nurturing them together, when they fly abroad, hanging side by side upon the wing, leading their life in mutual intercourse, giving with their bills a sign of their peaceful harmony, and fulfilling a law of unanimity in every way. Cyprian de Unit. Eccles.

CHRYS. Christ indeed had already manifested Himself at His birth by many oracles, but because men would not consult them, He who had in the mean time remained secret, again more clearly revealed Himself in a second birth. For formerly a star in the heavens, now the Father at the waves of Jordan declared Him, and as the Spirit descended upon Him, pouring forth that voice over the head of Him who was baptized, as it follows, *And a voice came from heaven, Thou art My beloved Son.* AMBROSE. We have seen the Spirit, but in a bodily shape, and the Father whom we cannot see we may hear. He is invisible because He is the Father, the Son also is invisible in His divinity, but He wished to manifest Himself in the body. And because the Father did not take the body, He wished therefore to prove to us that He was present in the Son, by saying, *Thou art My Son.* ATHAN. The holy Scriptures by the name of Son set forth two meanings; one similar to that spoken of in the Gospel, *He gave to them power that they should become the sons of God;* another according to which Isaac is the son of Abraham. Christ is not then simply called a Son of God, but the article is prefixed, that we should understand that He alone is really and by nature the Son; and hence He is said to be the *Only begotten.* For if according to the madness of Arius He is called Son, as they are called who obtain the name through grace, He will seem in no way to differ from us. It remains therefore that in another respect we must confess Christ to be the Son of God, even as Isaac is acknowledged to be the son of Abraham. For that which is naturally begotten of another, and takes not its origin from any thing besides nature, accounts a son. But it is said, Was then the birth of the Son with suffering as of a man? By no means. God since He cannot be divided is Athan. de Dec. Nic. Syn.

without suffering the Father of the Son. Hence He is called the Word of the Father, because neither is the word of man even produced with suffering, and since God is by nature one, He is the Father of one only Son, and therefore it is added, *Beloved.* For when a man has only one son, he loves him very much, but if he becomes father of many, his affection is divided by being distributed. ATHAN. But as the prophet had before announced the promise of God, saying, *I will send Christ My Son,* that promise being now as it were accomplished at Jordan, He rightly adds, *In Thee I am well pleased.* BEDE. As if He said, In Thee have I appointed My good pleasure, i. e. to carry on by Thee what seems good to Me. GREG. Or else, Every one who by repentance corrects any of his actions, by that very repentance shews that he has displeased himself, seeing he amends what he has done. And since the Omnipotent Father spoke of sinners after the manner of men, saying, *It repents Me that I have made man,* He (so to speak) displeased Himself in the sinners whom He had created. But in Christ alone He pleased Himself, for in Him alone He found no fault that He should blame Himself, as it were, by repentance.

Greg. sup. Ezech. Hom. 8.

Gen. 6, 7.

AUG. But the words of Matthew, *This is My beloved Son,* and those of Luke, *Thou art My beloved Son,* convey the same meaning; for the heavenly voice spoke one of these. But Matthew wished to shew that by the words, *This is My beloved Son,* it was meant rather to declare to the hearers, that He was the Son of God. For that was not revealed to Christ which He knew, but they heard it who were present, and for whom the voice came.

Aug. de Con. Ev. lib. ii. c. 14.

23. And Jesus Himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli,

24. Which was the son of Matthat, which was the son of Levi, which was the son of Melchi, which was the son of Janna, which was the son of Joseph,

25. Which was the son of Mattathias, which was

the son of Amos, which was the son of Naum, which was the son of Esli, which was the son of Nagge,

26. Which was the son of Maath, which was the son of Mattathias, which was the son of Semei, which was the son of Joseph, which was the son of Juda,

27. Which was the son of Joanna, which was the son of Rhesa, which was the son of Zorobabel, which was the son of Salathiel, which was the son of Neri,

28. Which was the son of Melchi, which was the son of Addi, which was the son of Cosam, which was the son of Elmodam, which was the son of Er,

29. Which was the son of Jose, which was the son of Eliezer, which was the son of Jorim, which was the son of Matthat, which was the son of Levi,

30. Which was the son of Simeon, which was the son of Juda, which was the son of Joseph, which was the son of Jonan, which was the son of Eliakim,

31. Which was the son of Melea, which was the son of Menan, which was the son of Mattatha, which was the son of Nathan, which was the son of David,

32. Which was the son of Jesse, which was the son of Obed, which was the son of Booz, which was the son of Salmon, which was the son of Naasson,

33. Which was the son of Aminadab, which was the son of Aram, which was the son of Esrom, which was the son of Phares, which was the son of Juda,

34. Which was the son of Jacob, which was the son of Isaac, which was the son of Abraham, which was the son of Thara, which was the son of Nachor,

35. Which was the son of Saruch, which was the son of Ragau, which was the son of Phalec, which was the son of Heber, which was the son of Sala,

36. Which was the son of Cainan, which was the

son of Arphaxad, which was the son of Sem, which was the son of Noe, which was the son of Lamech,

37. Which was the son of Mathusala, which was the son of Enoch, which was the son of Jared, which was the son of Maleleel, which was the son of Cainan,

38. Which was the son of Enos, which was the son of Seth, which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God.

ORIGEN. Having related our Lord's baptism, he next enters upon the generation of the Lord, not bringing it down from the higher to the lower, but beginning with Christ, he carries it up to God Himself. Hence he says, *And Jesus Himself began.* For when He was baptized, and had Himself undergone the mystery of the second birth, then He is said to have begun, that thou also mightest destroy this first birth and be born in the second. GREG. NAZ. We must therefore consider who He was who was baptized, and by whom and when: seeing He was pure, baptized by John, and at a time when His miracles had begun, that we might thence derive the lesson of purifying ourselves beforehand, and of embracing humility, and of not beginning to preach until the maturity of our spiritual and natural life. The first of these was said for their sakes who are receiving baptism; for although the gift of baptism brings remission, yet we must fear lest we return again to our vomit. The second is pointed at those who exalt themselves against the stewards of the mysteries, whom they may excel in rank. The third was uttered for those who trust in their youth, and imagine that any age is fit for promotion and teaching. Jesus is cleansed, and dost thou despise purification? By John, and dost thou say aught against thy teacher. At thirty years old, but dost thou in teaching precede thy elders? But the example of Daniel and the like are ready in thy mouth, for every guilty person is ready with an answer. But that is not the law of the Church which seldom happens, as neither does a single swallow make the spring. CHRYS. Or, He waited accomplishing the whole law until that age which takes in every sin, that none might say that He abrogated the law because He was not able to fulfil it.

Greg. Orat. 39.

GREEK EX. For this reason also He came at thirty years to be baptized, to shew that spiritual regeneration makes men perfect as far as regards their spiritual life. BEDE. The thrice ten years also which our Saviour had passed when He was baptized might intimate also the mystery of our baptism, because of the faith in the Trinity, and the obedience to the Decalogue. GREG. NAZ. Still must a child be baptized if necessity demands it. For it is better to be insensibly sanctified than to pass from this life unsealed. But you will say, Christ is baptized at thirty years old, and He was God, but thou biddest us to hasten our baptism. In that thou saidst God, the objection was done away: He needed no cleansing, nor was any danger hanging over Him while He put off His baptism. But with thee it extends to no slight calamity, if thou passest from this life born in corruption, but not if thou hast put on the robe of incorruption. And truly it is a blessed thing to keep unsullied the clean robe of baptism, but it is better at times to be slightly stained, than to be altogether devoid of grace. CYRIL. Although in truth Christ had no father according to the flesh, yet some fancied He had a father. Hence it follows, *As was supposed the son of Joseph*. AMBROSE. Rightly *as was supposed*, since in reality He was not, but was supposed to be so, because Mary who was espoused to Joseph was His mother. But we might doubt why the descent of Joseph is described rather than that of Mary, (seeing that Mary brought forth Christ of the Holy Spirit, while Joseph seemed to be out of the line of our Lord's descent,) were we not informed of the custom of the Holy Scripture, which always seeks the origin of the husband, and especially in this case, since in Joseph's descent we also find that of Mary. For Joseph being a just man took a wife really from his own tribe and country, and so at the time of the taxing Joseph went up from the family and country of David to be taxed with Mary his wife. She who gives in the returns from the same family and country, shews herself to be of that family and country. Hence he goes on in the descent of Joseph, and adds, *Who was the son of Eli*. But let us consider the fact, that St. Matthew makes Jacob, who was the father of Joseph, to be son of Nathan, but Luke says that Joseph (to whom Mary was espoused)

Severus.

Greg. Orat. 40.

Cyril. Glaph. in Exod. lib. i.

was the son of Eli. How then could there be two fathers, (namely, Eli and Jacob,) to one man. GREG. NAZ. But some say that there is one succession from David to Joseph, which each Evangelist relates under different names. But this is absurd, since at the beginning of this genealogy, two brothers come in Nathan and Salomon, from whom the lines are carried in different ways. EUSEB. Let us then more carefully explain the meaning of the words themselves. For if when Matthew affirmed Joseph to be the son of Jacob, Luke had in like manner affirmed that Joseph was the son of Eli, there would be some dispute. But seeing the case is that Matthew gives his opinion, Luke repeats the common opinion of many, not his own, saying, *as was supposed,* I do not think that there is any room for doubt. For since there were among the Jews different opinions of the genealogy of Christ, and yet all traced Him up to David because to him the promises were made, while many affirmed that Christ would come through Solomon and the other kings, some shunned this opinion because of the many crimes related of their kings, and because Jeremiah said of Jechonias, that "a man should not rise of his seed to sit on the throne of David." This last view Luke takes, though conscious that Matthew gives the real truth of the genealogy. This is the first reason. The next is a deeper one. For Matthew when he began to write of the things before the conception of Mary and the birth of Jesus in the flesh, very fitly as in a history commences with the ancestry in the flesh, and descending from thence deduces His generation from those who went before. For when the word of God became flesh, He descended. But Luke hastens forward to the regeneration which takes place in baptism, and then gives another succession of families, and rising up from the lowest to the highest, keeps out of sight those sinners of whom Matthew makes mention, (because that he who is born again in God is separated from his guilty parents, being made the son of God,) and relates those who have led a virtuous life in the sight of God. For thus it was said to Abraham, *Thou shalt set out to thy fathers,* not fathers in the flesh, but in God, on account of their likeness in virtue. To him therefore who is born in God he ascribes

Greg. Carm. 18.

Jer. 22, 30.

Gen. 15, 15.

parents who are according to God on account of this resemblance in character.

PSEUDO-AUG. Or in another way; Matthew descends from Aug.
David through Salomon to Joseph: but Luke beginning Quæst. Nov. ac
from Eli, who was in the line of our Saviour, ascends through Vet.
the line of Nathan the son of David, and joins the tribes of Test. 56.
Eli and Joseph, shewing that they are both of the same family, and thereby that the Saviour was not only the son of Joseph, but also of Eli. For by the same reason by which the Saviour is called the son of Joseph, he is also the son of Eli, and of all the rest who are of the same tribe. Hence that which the Apostle says, *Of whom are the fathers, and* Rom. 9, 5.
from whom Christ came according to the flesh. AUG. Or Aug.
there occur three reasons, by one of which the Evangelist Quæst. Ev. ii.
was led. For either one Evangelist has mentioned the father qu. 5.
by whom Joseph was begotten, but the other his maternal grandfather, or some one of his ancestors. Or one of the fathers mentioned was the natural father of Joseph, the other his father who had adopted him. Or after the manner of the Jews, when a man has died without children, the next of kin taking his wife ascribes to his dead kinsman the son whom he has himself begotten. AMBROSE. For it is related that Matthas, who was descended from Salomon, begat Jacob as his son, and died leaving his wife living, whom Melchi took unto him as wife, and from her Eli was born. Again, Eli, when his brother Jacob died without children, was joined to his brother's wife, and begot a son Joseph, who according to law is called the son of Jacob, since Eli raised up seed to his deceased brother, according Deut.
to the order of the ancient law. BEDE. Or else, Jacob, 25, 5.
taking the wife of his brother Eli who had died without children according to the command of the law, begot Joseph, by natural parentage his own son, but by the ordinance of the law the son of Eli. AUG. It is most probable that Luke Aug.
took the origin by adoption, as not being willing to say that de Con. Ev. lib.
Joseph was begotten by him whose son he related him to ii. c. 3.
be. For more easily is a man said to be his son by whom he was adopted, than to be begotten by him from whose flesh he was not born. But Matthew saying, "Abraham begat Isaac, and Isaac begat Jacob," and continuing in the

word "begat," until at last he says, but "Jacob begat Joseph," has sufficiently expressed that he has carried through the succession of the fathers, to that father by whom Joseph was not adopted, but begotten. Although even supposing that Luke should say that Joseph was begotten by Eli, neither ought that word to perplex us. For it is not absurd to say that a man has begotten not in the flesh but in love the son whom he has adopted. But rightly has Luke taken the origin by adoption, for by adoption are we made the sons of God, by believing on the Son of God, but by His birth in the flesh, the son of God has rather for our sakes become the Son of man. CHRYS. But because this part of the Gospel consists of a series of names, men think there is nothing valuable to be derived therefrom. Lest then we should feel this, let us try to examine every step. For from the mere name we may extract an abundant treasure, for names are indicative of many things. For they savour of the Divine mercy and the offerings of thanks by women, who when they obtained sons gave a name significant of the gift. GLOSS. By interpretation then Eli means, "My God," or "climbing," *Who was the Son of Matthat,* i.e. "forgiving sins." *Who was the son of Levi,* ie. "being added." AMBROSE. Luke rightly thought, seeing that he could not embrace more of the sons of Jacob, lest he should seem to be wandering from the line of descent in a superfluous course, that the ancient names of the Patriarchs, though occurring in others far later, Joseph, Judah, Simeon, and Levi should not be omitted. For we recognise in these four kinds of virtue; in Judah, the mystery of our Lord's Passion prophesied by figure; in Joseph, an example of chastity going before; in Simeon, the punishment of injured modesty; in Levi, the priestly office. Hence it follows, *Who was the son of Melchi,* i.e. "my King." *Who was the son of Janna,* i.e. "a right hand." *Who was the son of Joseph,* i.e. "growing up;" but this was a different Joseph. *Who was the son of Mattathias,* i.e. "the gift of God," or "sometimes." *Who was the son of Amos,* i.e. "loading, or he loaded." *Who was the son of Naum,* i.e. "help me." *Who was the son of Matthat,* i.e. "desire." *Who was the son of Mattathias,* as above. *Who was the*

Chrys. Hom. 31, in Ep. ad Rom.

Gloss. interlin.

son of Simei, i.e. "obedient." *Who was the son of Joseph,* i.e. "increase." *Who was the son of Judah,* i.e. "confessing." *Joanna,* "the Lord, his grace," or "the gracious Lord." *Resa,* "merciful." *Zorobabel,* "chief or master of Babylon." *Salathiel,* "God my petition." *Neri,* "my lanthern." *Melchi,* "my kingdom." *Addi,* "strong or violent." *Cosam,* "divining." *Her,* "watching, or watch, or of skins." *Who was the son of Jesus,* i.e. "Saviour." *Eliezer,* i.e. "God my helper." *Joarim,* i.e. "God exalting, or, is exalting." *Matthat,* as above. *Levi,* as above. *Simeon,* i.e. "He has heard the sadness, or the sign." *Juda,* as above. *Joseph,* as above. *Jonah,* a dove, or wailing. *Eliachim,* i.e. "the resurrection of God." *Melchi,* i.e. "his king." *Menan,* i.e. "my bowels." *Mattathias,* i.e. "gift." *Nathan,* i.e. "He gave, or, of giving." AMBROSE. But by Nathan we perceive expressed the dignity of Prophecy, that as Christ Jesus alone fulfilled all things, in each of His ancestors different kinds of virtue might precede Him. It follows, *Who was the son of David.* ORIGEN. The Lord descending into the world took upon Him the person of all sinners, and was willing to be born of the stock of Solomon, (as Matthew relates,) whose sins have been written down, and of the rest, many of whom did evil in the sight of God. But when He ascended, and is described as being born a second time in baptism, (as Luke relates,) He is not born through Salomon, but Nathan, who reproves the father for the death of Uriah, and the birth of Solomon. AUG. But it must be confessed that a prophet of this same name reproves David, that he might be thought to be the same man, whereas he was different. Aug. Retract. i. c. 26.

GREG. NAZ. From David upwards according to each Evangelist there is an unbroken line of descent; as it follows, *Who was the son of Jesse.* Greg. ubi sup. GLOSS. David is interpreted, "with a mighty arm, strong in fight." Gloss. ubi sup. *Obith,* i.e. "slavery." *Booz,* i.e. "strong." *Salmon,* i.e. "capable of feeling, or peacemaking." *Naasson,* i.e. "augury, or belonging to serpents." *Aminadab,* "the people being willing." *Aram,* i.e. "upright, or lofty." *Esrom,* i.e. "an arrow." *Phares,* i.e. "division." *Judah,* i.e. "confessing." *Who was the son of Jacob,* i.e. "supplanted." *Isaac,* i.e. "laughing or joy." *Abraham,* i.e. "the father of many nations, or the people."

Chrys. Hom. in Matt. 1.

CHRYS. Matthew, who wrote as for the Jews, had no further object than to shew that Christ proceeded from Abraham and David, for this was most grateful to the Jews. Luke however, as speaking to all men in common, carried his account beyond, as far even as Adam. Hence it follows, *Who was the son of Thara.* GLOSS. Which is interpreted, "finding out," or "wickedness." *Nachor,* i.e. "the light rested." *Sarug,* i.e. "correction," or "holding the reins," or "perfection." *Ragan,* i.e. "sick," or "feeding." *Phares,* i.e. "dividing," or "divided." *Heber,* i.e. "passing over." *Sala,* i.e. "taking away." *Canaan,* i.e. "lamentation," or "their possession." BEDE. The name and generation of Cainan, according to the Hebrew reading, is found neither in Genesis, nor in the Chronicles, but Arphaxad is stated to have begot Sala his son without any one intervening. Know then that Luke borrowed this generation from the Septuagint, where it is written, that Arphaxad at a hundred and thirty-five years old begot Cainan, but he at a hundred and thirty years begot Sala. It follows, *Who was the son of Arphaxad.* GLOSS. i.e. "healing the laying waste." *Sem,* i.e. "a name," or being "named." *Who was the son of Noe,* i.e. "rest."

Gloss. ubi sup.

dierum Vulg. verbis.

Gloss. ubi sup.

AMBROSE. The mention of just Noah ought not to be omitted among our Lord's generations, that as our Lord was born the builder of His Church, He might seem to have sent Noah beforehand, the author of His race, who had before founded the Church under the type of an ark. *Who was the son of Lamech.* GLOSS. i.e. "humility, or striking, or struck, or humble." *Who was the son of Mathusalem,* i.e. "the sending forth of death," or "he died," also "he asked."

Gloss ubi sup.

AMBROSE. His years are numbered beyond the deluge, that since Christ is the only one whose life experiences no age, in His ancestors also He might seem to have felt not the deluge. *Who was the son of Enoch.* And here is a manifest declaration of our Lord's piety and divinity, since our Lord neither experienced death, and returned to heaven, the founder of whose race was taken up into heaven. Whence it is plain that Christ could not die, but was willing that His death should profit us. And Enoch indeed was taken, that his heart might not change by wickedness, but the Lord,

whom the wickedness of the world could not change, returned to that place whence He had come by the greatness of His own nature. BEDE. But rightly rising up from the baptized Son of God to God the Father, he places Enoch in the seventy-seventh step, who, having put off death, was translated unto Paradise, that he might signify that those, who by the grace of adoption of sons are born again of water and the Holy Spirit, are in the meantime (after the dissolution of the body) to be received into eternal rest, for the number seventy, because of the seventh of the sabbath, signifies the rest of those who, the grace of God assisting them, have fulfilled the decalogue of the law. GLOSS. Enoch is interpreted "dedication." *Jared,* i.e. descending or "holding together." *Malaleleel,* i.e. "the praised of God," or "praising God." *Cainan,* as above. *Enos,* i.e. "man," or "despairing," or "violent." *Seth,* i.e. "placing," "settling," "he hath placed." Seth, the last son of Adam, is not omitted, that as there were two generations of people, it might be signified under a figure that Christ was to be reckoned rather in the last than the first.

It follows, *Who was the son of Adam.* GLOSS. Which is "man," or "of the earth," or "needy." *Who was the son of God.* AMBROSE. What could better agree than that the holy generation should commence from the Son of God, and be carried up even to the Son of God; and that he who was created should precede in a figure, in order that he who was born might follow in substance, so that he who was made after the image of God might go before, for whose sake the image of God was to descend. For Luke thought that the origin of Christ should be referred to God, because God is the true progenitor of Christ, or the Father according to the true birth, or the Author of the mystical gift according to baptism and regeneration, and therefore he did not from the first begin to describe His generation, but not till after he had unfolded His baptism, that both by nature and by grace he might declare Him to be the Son of God. But what more evident sign of His divine generation than that when about to speak of it St. Luke introduces first the Father, saying, *Thou art My beloved Son?*

Gloss. ubi sup.

AUG. He sufficiently declared by this that he called

Aug. de Con. Ev. lib. ii. c. 3. not Joseph the son of Eli because he was begotten by him, but rather because he was adopted by him, for he has called also Adam himself son, since though made by God, yet by grace (which he forfeited by sin) he was placed as a son in paradise. THEOPHYL. For this reason he closes the generations in God, that we may learn that those fathers who intervene, Christ will raise up to God, and make them sons of God, and that it might be believed also that the birth of Christ was without seed; as if he said, If thou believest not that the second Adam was made without seed, you must come to the first Adam, and you will find that he was made by God without seed. Aug. ubi sup. c. 4. AUG. Matthew indeed wished to set forth God descending to our mortality; accordingly at the beginning of the Gospel he recounted the generations from Abraham to the birth of Christ in a descending scale. But Luke, not at the beginning, but after the baptism of Christ, relates the generation not descending but ascending, as if marking out rather the high priest in the expiation of sins, of whom John bore testimony, saying, *Behold, who taketh away the sins of the world.* But by ascending he comes to God, to whom we are reconciled, being cleansed and expiated. AMBROSE. Nor do the Evangelists seem so to differ who have followed the old order, nor can you wonder if from Abraham down to Christ there are more successions according to Luke, fewer according to Matthew, since you must admit the line to have been traced through different persons. But it might be that some men have passed a very long life, but the men of the next generation have died at an early age, since we see how many old men live to see their grandchildren, while others depart as soon as they have sons born to them. Aug. Quæst. Ev. lib. ii. qu. 6. AUG. But most fitly with regard to our baptized Lord does Luke reckon the generations through seventy-seven persons. For both the ascent to God is expressed, to whom we are reconciled by the abolition of sins, and by baptism is brought to man the remission of all his sins, which are signified by that number. For eleven times seven are seventy-seven. But by the tenth number is meant perfect happiness. Hence it is plain that the going beyond the tenth marks the sin of one through pride coveting to have more. But this is said to be seven times to

signify that the transgression was caused by the moving of man. For by the third number the immortal part of man is represented, but by the fourth the body. But motion is not expressed in numbers, as when we say, one, two, three; but when we say, once, twice, thrice. And so by seven times eleven, is signified a transgression wrought by man's action.

CHAP. IV.

1. And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness.

2. Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days He did eat nothing: and when they were ended, He afterward hungered.

3. And the devil said unto Him, If Thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread.

4. And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.

THEOPHYL. Christ is tempted after His baptism, shewing us that after we are baptized, temptations await us. Hence it is said, *But Jesus being full of the Holy Spirit, &c.* CYRIL. God said in times past, *My Spirit shall not always abide in men, for that they are flesh.* (Gen. 6, 3. Vulg.) But now that we have been enriched with the gift of regeneration by water and the Spirit, we are become partakers of the Divine nature by participation of the Holy Spirit. But the first-born among many brethren first received the Spirit, who Himself also is the giver of the Spirit, that we through Him might also receive the grace of the Holy Spirit. ORIGEN. When therefore you read that Jesus was *full of the Holy Spirit,* and it is written in the Acts concerning the Apostles, that they were filled with the Holy Spirit, you must not suppose that the Apostles were equal to the Saviour. For as if you should say, *These vessels are full of wine or oil,* you would not thereby affirm them to be equally full, so Jesus and

Paul were full of the Holy Spirit, but Paul's vessel was far less than that of Jesus, and yet each was filled according to its own measure. Having then received baptism, the Saviour, being full of the Holy Spirit, which came upon Him from heaven in the form of a dove, was led by the Spirit, because, *as many as are led by the Spirit, they are* Rom.
the sons of God, but He was above all, especially the Son of 8, 14.
God. BEDE. That there might be no doubt by what Spirit He was led, while the other Evangelists say, *into the wilderness*, Luke has purposely added, *And He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness for forty days.* That no unclean spirit should be thought to have prevailed against Him, who being full of the Holy Spirit did whatever he wished. GREEK EX. But if *we* order our lives according to our own Severus.
will, how was He led about unwillingly? Those words then, *He was led by the Spirit*, have some meaning of this kind: He led of His own accord that kind of life, that He might present an opportunity to the tempter. BASIL. For not by word provoking the enemy, but by His actions rousing him, He seeks the wilderness. For the devil delights in the wilderness, he is not wont to go into the cities, the harmony of the citizens troubles him.

AMBROSE. He was led therefore into the wilderness, to the intent that He might provoke the devil, for if the one had not contended, the other it seems had not conquered. In a mystery, it was to deliver that Adam from exile who was cast out of Paradise into the wilderness. By way of example, it was to shew us that the devil envies us, whenever we strive after better things; and that then we must use caution, lest the weakness of our minds should lose us the grace of the mystery. Hence it follows: *And He was tempted of the devil.* CYRIL. Behold, He is among the wrestlers, who as God awards the prizes. He is among the crowned, who crowns the heads of the saints. GREG. Our enemy was how- Greg. 3.
ever unable to shake the purpose of the Mediator between Mor. sup. Job 2.
God and men. For He condescended to be tempted outwardly, yet so that His soul inwardly, resting in its divinity, remained unshaken. ORIGEN. But Jesus is tempted by the devil forty days, and what the temptations were we know not. They were perhaps omitted, as being greater than could

be committed to writing. BASIL. Or, the Lord remained for forty days untempted, for the devil knew that He fasted, yet hungered not, and dared not therefore approach Him. Hence it follows: *And He eat nothing in those days.* He fasted indeed, to shew that He who would gird Himself for struggles against temptation must be temperate and sober. AMBROSE. There are three things which united together conduce to the salvation of man; The Sacrament, The Wilderness, Fasting. No one who has not rightly contended receives a crown, but no one is admitted to the contest of virtue, except first being washed from the stains of all his sins, he is consecrated with the gift of heavenly grace. GREG. NAZ. He fasted in truth forty days, eating nothing. (For He was God.) But we regulate our fasting according to our strength, although the zeal of some persuades them to fast beyond what they are able. BASIL. But we must not, however, so use the flesh, that through want of food our strength should waste away, nor that by excess of mortification our understandings wax dull and heavy. Our Lord, therefore, once performed this work, but during this whole succeeding time He governed His body with due order, and so in like manner did Moses and Elias. CHRYS. But very wisely, He exceeded not their number of days, lest indeed He should be thought to have come in appearance only, and not to have really received the flesh, or lest the flesh should seem to be something beyond human nature.

Greg. Orat. 40.

Basil. ex Const. Mon.

Chrys. Hom. 13. in Matt.

AMBROSE. But mark the mystical number of days. For you remember that for forty days the waters of the deep were poured forth, and by sanctifying a fast of that number of days, He brings before us the returning mercies of a calmer sky. By a fast of so many days also, Moses earned for himself the understanding of the law. Our fathers being for so many days settled in the wilderness, obtained the food of Angels. AUG. Now that number is a sacrament of our time and labour, in which under Christ's discipline we contend against the devil, for it signifies our temporal life. For the periods of years run in courses of four, but forty contains four tens. Again, those ten are completed by the number one successively advancing up to four. This plainly shews that the fast of forty days, i.e. the humiliation

Aug. de Con. Ev. lib. i. c. 4.

of the soul, the Law and the Prophets have consecrated by Moses and Elias, the Gospel by the fast of our Lord Himself.

BASIL. But because not to suffer hunger is above the nature of man, our Lord took upon Himself the feeling of hunger, and submitted Himself as it pleased Him to human nature, both to do and to suffer those things which were His own. Hence it follows: *And those days being ended, He was a hungered.* Not forced to that necessity which overpowers nature, but as if provoking the devil to the conflict. For the devil, knowing that wherever hunger is there is weakness, sets about to tempt Him, and as the deviser or inventer of temptations, Christ permitting him tries to persuade Him to satisfy His appetite with the stones. As it follows; *But the devil said unto Him, If Thou art the Son of God, command these stones that they be made bread.* AMBROSE. There are three especial weapons which we are taught the devil is wont to arm himself with, that he may wound the soul of man. One is of the appetite, another of boasting, the third ambition. He began with that wherewith he had already conquered, namely, Adam. Let us then beware of the appetite, let us beware of luxury, for it is a weapon of the devil. But what mean his words, *If Thou art the Son of God,* unless he had known that the Son would come, but supposed Him not to have come from the weakness of His body. He first endeavours to find Him out, then to tempt Him. He professes to trust Him as God, then tries to deceive Him as man. ORIGEN. When a father is asked by his son for bread, he does not give him a stone for bread, but the devil like a crafty and deceitful foe gives stones for bread. BASIL. He tried to persuade Christ to satisfy His appetite with stones, i.e. to shift his desire from the natural food to that which was beyond nature or unnatural. ORIGEN. I suppose also that even now at this very time the devil shews a stone to men that he may tempt them to speak, saying to them, *Command this stone to be made bread.* If thou seest the heretics devouring their lying doctrines as if they were bread, know that their teaching is a stone which the devil shews them.

BASIL. But Christ while He vanquishes temptation, ban-

Basil. ubi sup.

Basil. ubi sup.

Basil. ubi sup.

ishes not hunger from our nature, as though that were the cause of evils, (which is rather the preservative of life,) but confining nature within its proper bounds, shews of what kind its nourishment is, as follows; *And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone.* THEOPHYL. As if He said, Not by bread alone is human nature sustained, but the word of God is sufficient to support the whole nature of man. Such was the food of the Israelites when they gathered manna during the space of forty years, and when they delighted in the taking of quails. By the Divine counsel Elias had the crows to entertain him; Elisha fed his companions on the herbs of the field. CYRIL. Or, our earthly body is nourished by earthly food, but the reasonable soul is strengthened by the Divine Word, to the right ordering of the Spirit. GREG. NAZ. For the body nourishes not our immaterial nature. GREG. NYSS. Virtue then is not sustained by bread, nor by flesh does the soul keep itself in health and vigour, but by other banquets than these is the heavenly life fostered, and increased. The nourishment of the good man is chastity, his bread, wisdom, his herbs, justice, his drink, freedom from passion, his delight, to be rightly wise. AMBROSE. You see then what kind of arms He uses to defend man against the assults of spiritual wickedness, and the allurements of the appetite. He does not exert His power as God, (for how had that profited me,) but as man He summons to Himself a common aid, that while intent upon the food of divine reading He may neglect the hunger of the body, and gain the nourishment of the word. For He who seeks after the word cannot feel the want of earthly bread; for divine things doubtless make up for the loss of human. At the same time by saying, *Man lives not by bread alone,* He shews that man was tempted, that is, our flesh which He assumed, not His own divinity.

Exod. 16, 15. Numb. 11, 32. 1 Kings 17, 6. 2 Kings 4, 44.

Greg. Poem. Mor. x. 624. Greg. in Eccles. Hom. 5.

εὐφροσύνη quasi ex εὐφρόνειν

5. And the devil taking Him up into a high mountain, shewed unto Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.

6. And the devil said unto Him, All this power will I give Thee, and the glory of them: for that is

delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it.

7. If Thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine.

8. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.

THEOPHYL. The enemy had first assailed Christ by the temptation of the appetite, as also he did Adam. He next tempts Him with the desire of gain or covetousness, shewing Him all the kingdoms of the world. Hence it follows, *And the devil taking Him up.* GREG. What marvel that He permitted Himself to be led by the devil into the mountains, who even endured to be crucified in His own body? THEOPHYL. But how did the devil shew Him all the kingdoms of the world? Some say that he presented them to Him in imagination, but I hold that he brought them before Him in visible form and appearance. TITUS BOS. Or, the devil described the world in language, and as he thought brought it vividly before our Lord's mind as though it were a certain house. AMBROSE. Truly in a moment of time, the kingdoms of this world are described. For here it is not so much the rapid glance of sight which is signified as is declared the frailty of mortal power. For in a moment all this passes by, and oftentimes the glory of this world has vanished before it has arrived. It follows, *And he said unto Him, I will give thee all this power.* TITUS. He lied in two respects. For he neither had to give, nor could he give that which he had not; he gains possession of nothing, but is an enemy reduced to fight. AMBROSE. For it is elsewhere said, that all power is from God. Therefore from God's hands comes the disposal of power, the lust of power is from the evil one; power is not itself evil, but he who evilly uses it. What then; is it good to exercise power, to desire honour? Good if it is bestowed upon us, not if it is seized. We must distinguish however in this good itself. There is one good use of the world, another of perfect virtue. It is good to seek God; it is a good thing

Greg. Hom. 6. in Ev.

Titus non occ

Rom. 13, 1.

that the desire of becoming acquainted with God should be hindered by no worldly business. But if he who seeks God, is, from the weakness of the flesh, and the narrowness of his mind, often tempted, how much more is he exposed who seeks the world? We are taught then to despise ambition, because it is subject to the power of the devil. But honour abroad is followed by danger at home, and in order to rule others a man is first their servant, and prostrates himself in obedience that he may be rewarded with honours, and the higher he aspires the lower he bends with feigned humility; whence he adds, *If Thou wilt fall down and worship me.* CYRIL. And dost thou, whose lot is the unquenchable fire, promise to the Lord of all that which is His own? Didst thou think to have Him for thy worshipper, from dread of whom the whole creation trembles? ORIGEN. Or, to view the whole in another light. Two kings are earnestly contending for a kingdom; The king of sin who reigneth over sinners, that is, the devil; The king of righteousness who ruleth the righteous, that is, Christ. The devil knowing that Christ had come to take away his kingdom, shews Him all the kingdoms of the world; not the kingdoms of the Persians and of the Medes, but his own kingdom whereby he reigned in the world, whereby some are under the dominion of fornication, others of covetousness. And he shews Him them in a moment of time, that is, in the present course of time, which is but a moment in comparison of eternity. For the Saviour needed not to be shewn for any longer time the affairs of this world, but as soon as He turned His eyes to look, He beheld sins reigning, and men made slaves to vice. The devil therefore says unto Him, Camest Thou to contend with me for dominion? Worship me, and behold I give Thee the kingdom I hold. Now the Lord would indeed reign, but being Righteousness itself, would reign without sin; and would have all nations subject to Him, that they might obey the truth, but would not so reign over others as that He Himself should be subject to the devil. Hence it follows, *And Jesus answering said unto him, It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God.* BEDE. The devil saying to our Saviour, *If Thou wilt fall down and wor-*

ship me, receives answer that he himself ought rather to worship Christ as his Lord and God. CYRIL. But how comes it that the Son (if as the heretics say a created being) is worshipped? What charge can be brought against those who served the creature, and not the Creator, if the Son (according to them a created being) we are to worship as God? ORIGEN. Or else, All these, he says, I would have subject to me, that they might worship the Lord God, and serve Him alone. But dost thou wish sin to begin from Me, which I came hither to destroy? CYRIL. This command touched him to the quick; for before Christ's coming he was everywhere worshipped. But the law of God casting him down from his usurped dominion, establishes the worship of Him alone who is really God. BEDE. But some one may ask how this injunction agrees with the word of the Apostle, which says, *Beloved, serve one another.* In the Greek, δουλεία signifies a common service, (i.e. given either to God or man,) according to which we are bid to serve one another; but λατρεία is the service due to the worship of the Deity, with which we are bid to serve God alone.

Cyril. in Thes. 32.

Gal. 5, 13

9. And he brought Him to Jerusalem, and set Him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto Him, If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down from hence:

10. For it is written, He shall give His angels charge over Thee, to keep Thee:

11. And in their hands they shall bear Thee up, lest at any time Thou dash Thy foot against a stone.

12. And Jesus answering said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

13. And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from Him for a season.

AMBROSE. The next weapon he uses is that of boasting, which always causes the offender to fall down; for they who love to boast of the glory of their virtue descend from the stand and vantage ground of their good deeds. Hence it is said, *And he led Him to Jerusalem.*

ORIGEN. He followed evidently as a wrestler, gladly setting out to meet the temptation, and saying, as it were, Lead me where you will, and you will find me the stronger in every thing. AMBROSE. It is the fate of boasting, that while a man thinks he is climbing higher, he is by his pretension to lofty deeds brought low. Hence it follows, *And he said unto Him, If Thou art the Son of God, throw Thyself*
Athan. non occ. *down.* ATHAN. The devil entered not into a contest with God, (for he durst not, and therefore said, *If Thou art the Son of God,*) but he contended with man whom once he had power to deceive. AMBROSE. That is truly the devil's language, which seeks to cast down the soul of man from the high ground of its good deeds, while he shews at the same time both his weakness and malice, for he can injure no one that does not first cast himself down. For he who forsaking heavenly things pursues earthly, rushes as it were wilfully down the self-sought precipice of a falling life. As soon then as the devil perceived his dart blunted, he who had subdued all men to his own power, began to think he had to deal with more than man. But Satan transforms himself into an angel of light, and often from the Holy Scriptures weaves his mesh for the faithful: hence it follows, *It is written, He shall give, &c.* ORIGEN. Whence knowest thou, Satan, that those things are written? Hast thou read the Prophets, or the oracles of God? Thou hast read them indeed, but not that thyself mightest be the better for the
2 Cor. 3, 6. reading, but that from the mere letter thou mightest slay them who are friends to the letter. Thou knowest that if thou wert to speak from His other books, thou wouldest not deceive. AMBROSE. Let not the heretic entrap thee by bringing examples from the Scriptures. The devil makes use of the testimony of the Scriptures not to teach but to deceive. ORIGEN. But mark how wily he is even in this testimony. For he would fain throw a slur upon the glory of the Saviour, as though he needed the assistance of angels, and would stumble were He not supported by their hands. But this was said not of Christ, but of the saints generally; He needs not the aid of angels, who is greater than angels. But let this teach thee, Satan, that the angels would stumble did not God sustain them; and thou stumblest, because thou

refusest to believe in Jesus Christ the Son of God. But why art thou silent as to what follows, *Thou shalt walk upon the asp and the basilisk,* except that thou art the basilisk, thou art the dragon and the lion? AMBROSE. But the Lord, to prevent the thought that those things which had been prophesied of Him were fulfilled according to the devil's will, and not by the authority of His own divine power, again so foils his cunning, that he who had alleged the testimony of Scripture, should by Scripture himself be overthrown. Hence it follows, *And Jesus answering said, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.* CHRYS. For it is of the devil to cast one's self into dangers, and try whether God will rescue us. CYRIL. God gives not help to those who tempt Him, but to those who believe on Him. Christ therefore did not shew His miracles to them that tempted Him, but said to them, *An evil generation seeketh a sign, and no sign shall be given to them.* CHRYS. But mark how the Lord, instead of being troubled, condescends to dispute from the Scriptures with the wicked one, that thou, as far as thou art able, mightest become like Christ. The devil knew the arms of Christ, beneath which he sunk. Christ took him captive by meekness, He overcame him by humility. Do thou also, when thou seest a man who has become a devil coming to meet thee, subdue him in like manner. Teach thy soul to conform its words to those of Christ. For as a Roman judge, who on the bench refuses to hear the reply of one who knows not how to speak as he does; so also Christ, except thou speakest after His manner, will neither hear thee nor protect thee. GREG. NYSS. In lawful contests the battle is terminated either when the adversary surrenders of his own accord to the conqueror, or is defeated in three falls, according to the rules of the art of fighting. Hence it follows, *And all the temptation being completed, &c.* AMBROSE. He would not have said that all the temptation was ended, had there not been in the three temptations which have been described the materials for every crime; for the causes of temptations are the causes of desire, namely, the delight of the flesh, the pomp of vain-glory, greediness of power. ATHAN. The enemy came to Him as man, but not finding in Him the marks of his ancient seed, he departed. AMBROSE. You see then that

Ps. 91, 13.

Mat. 12, 39.

Greg. ubi sup.

Athan. non occ.

the devil is not obstinate on the field, is wont to give way to true virtue; and if he ceases not to hate, he yet dreads to advance, for so he escapes a more frequent defeat. As soon then as he heard the name of God, he retired (it is said) for a season, for afterwards he comes not to tempt, but to fight openly. THEOPHYL. Or, having tempted Him in the desert with pleasure, he retires from Him until the crucifixion, when he was about to tempt Him with sorrow. MAXIMUS. Or the devil had prompted Christ in the desert to prefer the things of the world to the love of God. The Lord commanded him to leave Him, (which itself was a mark of Divine love). It was afterwards then enough to make Christ appear the false advocate of love to His neighbours, and therefore while He was teaching the paths of life, the devil stirred up the Gentiles and Pharisees to lay traps for Him that He might be brought to hate them. But the Lord, from the feeling of love which He had towards them, exhorted, reproved, ceased not to bestow mercy upon them.

Max. lib. ad piet. ex. 12.

AUG. The whole of this narrative Matthew relates in a similar manner, but not in the same order. It is uncertain therefore which took place first, whether the kingdoms of the earth were first shewn unto Him, and He was afterwards taken up to the pinnacle of the temple; or whether this came first, and the other afterwards. It matters little however which, as long as it is clear that they all took place.

Aug. de con. Ev. lib. ii. c. 6.

MAXIMUS. But the reason why one Evangelist places this event first, and another that, is because vain-glory and covetousness give birth in turn to one another. ORIGEN. But John, who had commenced his Gospel from God, saying, *In the beginning was the Word*, did not describe the temptation of the Lord, because God cannot be tempted, of whom he wrote. But because in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke the human generations are given, and in Mark it is man who is tempted, therefore Matthew, Luke, and Mark have described the temptation of the Lord.

Max. ut sup.

14. And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of Him through all the region round about.

15. And He taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all.

16. And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up: and, as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.

17. And there was delivered unto Him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written,

18. The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor: He hath sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised.

19. To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

20. And He closed the book, and He gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on Him.

21. And He began to say unto them, This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears.

Origen. The Lord having overcome the tempter, power, was added to Him, i.e. as far as regards the manifestation of it. Hence it is said, *And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit.* Bede. By the power of the Spirit he means shewing forth of miracles. Cyril. Now He performed miracles not from any external power, and from having as it were the acquired grace of the Holy Spirit, as other saints, but rather as being by nature the Son of God, and partaking of all things which are the Father's, He exercises as by His own power and operation that grace which is of the Holy Spirit. But it was right that from that time He should become known, and that the mystery of His humanity should shine forth among those who were of the seed of Israel. It therefore follows, *And His fame went out.* Bede. And

because wisdom belongs to teaching, but power to works, both are joined here, as it follows, *And He taught in the synagogue.*

Synagogue, which is a Greek word, is rendered in Latin *congregatio.* By this name then the Jews were accustomed to call not only the gathering together of people, but also the house where they met together to hear the word of God; as we call by the name of Church, both the place and the company of the faithful. But there is this difference between the synagogue which is called *congregation,* and the Church which is interpreted *convocation,* that flocks and cattle, and any thing else can be gathered together in one, but only rational beings can be called together. Accordingly the Apostolical doctors thought right to call a people which was distinguished by the superior dignity of a new grace rather by the name of Church, than Synagogue. But rightly also was the fact of His being magnified by those present proved, by actual evidence, of word and deed, as it follows, *And He was magnified by all.* ORIGEN. But you must not think that they only were happy, and that you are deprived of Christ's teaching. For now also throughout the world He teaches through His instruments, and is now more glorified by all men, than at that time when those only in one province were gathered together.

CYRIL. He communicates the knowledge of Himself to those among whom He was brought up according to the flesh. As it follows, *And He came to Nazareth.* THEOPHYL. That He might teach us to benefit and instruct first our brethren, then to extend our kindness to the rest of our friends. BEDE. They flocked together on the Sabbath day in the synagogues, that, resting from all worldly occupations, they might set themselves down with a quiet mind to meditate on the precepts of the Law. Hence it follows, *And He entered as was His custom on the Sabbath day into the synagogue.* AMBROSE. The Lord in every thing so humbled Himself to obedience, that He did not despise even the office of a reader, as it follows, *And He rose up to read, and there was delivered unto Him the book, &c.* He received the book indeed, that He might shew Himself to be the same who spoke in the prophets, and that He might stop the

blasphemies of the wicked, who say that there is one God of the Old Testament, another of the New; or who say that Christ had His beginning from a virgin. For how did He begin from a virgin, who spoke before that virgin was?

ORIGEN. He opens not the book by chance, and finds a chapter containing a prophecy of Himself, but by the providence of God. Hence it follows, *And when He had opened the book, He found the place, &c.* ATHAN. He says this to explain to us the cause of the revelation made to the world, and of His taking upon Him the human nature. For as the Son, though He is the giver of the Spirit, does not refuse to confess as man that by the Spirit He casts out devils, so, inasmuch as He was made man, He does not refuse to say, *The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me.*

Isa. 61, 1.

Athan. Orat. 2. cont. Arian.

CYRIL. In like manner we confess Him to have been anointed, inasmuch as He took upon Him our flesh, as it follows, *Because He hath anointed Me.* For the Divine nature is not anointed, but that which is cognate to us. So also when He says that He was sent, we must suppose Him speaking of His human nature. For it follows, *He hath sent Me to preach the Gospel to the poor.* AMBROSE. You see the Trinity co-eternal and perfect. The Scripture speaks of Jesus as perfect God and perfect man. It speaks of the Father, and the Holy Spirit, who was shewn to be a co-operator, when in a bodily form as a dove He descended upon Christ. ORIGEN. By the poor He means the Gentile nations, for they were poor, possessing nothing at all, having neither God, nor Law, nor Prophets, nor justice, and the other virtues. AMBROSE. Or, He is anointed all over with spiritual oil, and heavenly virtue, that He might enrich the poverty of man's condition with the everlasting treasure of His resurrection. BEDE. He is sent also to preach the Gospel to the poor, saying, *Blessed are the poor, for yours is the kingdom of heaven.* CYRIL. For perhaps to the poor in spirit He declares in these words, that among all the gifts which are obtained through Christ, upon them was bestowed a free gift. It follows, *To heal the broken hearted.* He calls those *broken hearted,* who are weak, of an infirm mind, and unable to resist the assaults of the passions, and to them He promises a healing remedy. BASIL. Or, He came to heal the broken

Basil. non occ. hearted, i.e. to afford a remedy to those that have their heart broken by Satan through sin, because beyond all other things sin lays prostrate the human heart. BEDE. Or, because Ps. 51, 17. it is written, *A broken and a contrite heart God will not despise.* He says therefore, that He is sent to heal the broken Ps. 147, 3. hearted, as it is written, *Who heals the broken hearted.*

It follows, *And to preach deliverance to the captives.* Chrys. in Ps. 125. CHRYS. The word captivity has many meanings. There is a good captivity, which St. Paul speaks of when he says, 2 Cor. 10, 5. *Bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.* There is a bad captivity also, of which it is said, 2 Tim. 3, 6. *Leading captive silly women laden with sins.* There is a captivity present to the senses, that is, by our bodily enemies. But the worst captivity is that of the mind, of which he here speaks. For sin exercises the worst of all tyrannies, commanding to do evil, and destroying them that obey it. From this prison of the soul Christ lets us free. THEOPHYL. But these things may be understood also of the dead, who being taken captive have been loosed from the dominion of hell by the resurrection of Christ. It follows, *And recovering of sight to the blind.* CYRIL. For the darkness which the devil has spread over the human heart, Christ the Sun of Righteousness 1 Thess. 5, 5. has removed, making men, as the Apostle says, children not of night and darkness, but of light and the day. For they who one time wandered have discovered the path of the righteous. It follows, *To set at liberty them that are bruised.* ORIGEN. For what had been so shattered and dashed about as man, who was set at liberty by Jesus and healed? BEDE. Or, *to set at liberty them that are bruised;* i.e. to relieve those who had been heavy laden with the intolerable burden of the Law.

ORIGEN But all these things were mentioned first, in order that after the recovery of sight from blindness, after deliverance from captivity, after being healed of divers wounds, we might come to the acceptable year of the Lord. As it follows, *To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.* Some say that, according to the simple meaning of the word, the Saviour preached the Gospel throughout Judæa in one year, and that this is what is meant by preaching the acceptable year of the Lord. Or, the acceptable year of the Lord is the whole time of the Church, during which,

while present in the body, it is absent from the Lord. BEDE. For not only was that year acceptable in which our Lord preached, but that also in which the Apostle preaches, saying, *Behold, now is the accepted time.* After 2 Cor. 6, 2. the acceptable year of the Lord, he adds, *And the day of retribution*[a]; that is, the final retribution, when the Lord shall give to every one according to his work. AMBROSE. Or, by the acceptable year of the Lord, he means this day extended through endless ages, which knows of no return to a world of labour, and grants to men everlasting reward and rest. It follows, *And He closed the book, and He gave it again.* BEDE. He read the book to those who were present to hear Him, but having read it, He returned it to the minister; for while He was in the world He spoke openly, teaching in the synagogues and in the temple; but about to return to heaven, He committed the office of preaching the Gospel to those who from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word. He read standing, because while explaining those Scriptures which were written of Him, He condescended to work in the flesh; but having returned the book, He sits down, because He restored Himself to the throne of heavenly rest. For standing is the part of the workman, but sitting of one who is resting or judging. So also let the preacher of the word rise up and read and work and preach, and sit down, i.e. wait for the reward of rest. But He opens the book and reads, because sending the Spirit, He taught His Church all truth; having shut the book, He returned it to the minister, because all things were not to be said unto all, but He committed the word to the teacher to be dispensed according to the capacity of the hearers. It follows, *And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fastened on Him.* ORIGEN. And now also if we will, our eyes can look upon the Saviour. For when you direct your whole heart to wisdom, truth, and the contemplation of the only-begotten Son of God, your eyes behold Jesus. CYRIL. But then He turned the eyes of all men upon Him, wondering how He knew the writing which He had never learnt. But since it was the custom of the Jews to say that the

[a] These words are quoted from the LXX, and are to be found in several of the N. T. versions. 229**. Arm. Ar. rom. Sax. Vulg. Ital. (exc. Cant.) Griesb.

prophecies spoken of Christ are completed either in certain of their chiefs, i.e. their kings, or in some of their holy prophets, the Lord made this announcement; as it follows, *But He began to say unto them that this Scripture is fulfilled.* BEDE. Because, in fact, as that Scripture had foretold, the Lord was both doing great things, and preaching greater.

22. And all bare Him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?

23. And He said unto them, Ye will surely say unto Me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in Thy country.

24. And He said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country.

25. But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land;

26. But unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow.

27. And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian.

Chrys. Hom. 48. in Matt. CHRYS. When our Lord came to Nazareth, He refrains from miracles, lest He should provoke the people to greater malice. But He sets before them His teaching no less wonderful than His miracles. For there was a certain ineffable grace in our Saviour's words which softened the hearts of the hearers. Hence it is said, *And they all bare Him witness.* BEDE. They bare Him witness that it was truly He, as He had said, of whom the prophet had spoken. CHRYS. Chrys. ubi sup. But foolish men, though wondering at the power of His words, little esteemed Him because of His reputed father. Hence it follows, *And they said, Is not this the Son of Joseph?* CYRIL.

But what prevents Him from filling men with awe, though He were the Son as was supposed of Joseph? Do you not see the Divine miracles, Satan already prostrate, men released from their sickness? CHRYS. For though after a long time and when He had begun to shew forth His miracles, He came to them; they did not receive Him, but again were inflamed with envy. Hence it follows, *And He said unto them, Ye will surely say unto Me this proverb, Physician, heal Thyself.* CYRIL. It was a common proverb among the Hebrews, invented as a reproach, for men used to cry out against infirm physicians, *Physician, heal thyself.* GLOSS. It was as if they said, We have heard that you performed many cures in Capernaum; cure also Thyself, i.e. Do likewise in your own city, where you were nourished and brought up. AUG. But since St. Luke mentions that great things had been already done by Him, which he knows he had not yet related, what is more evident than that he knowingly anticipated the relation of them. For he had not proceeded so far beyond our Lord's baptism as that he should be supposed to have forgotten that he had not yet related any of those things which were done in Capernaum. AMBROSE. But the Saviour purposely excuses Himself for not working miracles in His own country, that no one might suppose that love of country is a thing to be lightly esteemed by us. For it follows, *But He says, Verily I say unto you, that no prophet is accepted in his own country.* CYRIL. As if He says, You wish Me to work many miracles among you, in whose country I have been brought up, but I am aware of a very common failing in the minds of many. To a certain extent it always happens, that even the very best things are despised when they fall to a man's lot, not scantily, but ever at his will. So it happens also with respect to men. For a friend who is ever at hand, does not meet with the respect due to him. BEDE. Now that Christ is called a Prophet in the Scriptures, Moses bears witness, saying, *God shall raise up a Prophet unto you from among your brethren.* AMBROSE. But this is given for an example, that in vain can you expect the aid of Divine mercy, if you grudge to others the fruits of their virtue. The Lord despises the envious, and withdraws the miracles of His power from them that are jealous of His divine blessings

Chrys. ubi sup.

Gloss. ordin.

Aug. de Cons. Ev. lib. ii. 42.

Deut. 18, 15.

in others. For our Lord's Incarnation is an evidence of His divinity, and His invisible things are proved to us by those which are visible. See then what evils envy produces. For envy a country is deemed unworthy of the works of its citizen, which was worthy of the conception of the Son of God.

ORIGEN. As far as Luke's narrative is concerned, our Lord is not yet said to have worked any miracle in Capernaum. For before He came to Capernaum, He is said to have lived at Nazareth. I cannot but think therefore that in these words, "whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum," there lies a mystery concealed, and that Nazareth is a type of the Jews, Capernaum of the Gentiles. For the time will come when the people of Israel shall say, "The things which Thou hast shewn to the whole world, shew also to us." Preach Thy word to the people of Israel, that then at least, when the fulness of the Gentiles has entered, all Israel may be saved. Our Saviour seems to me to have well answered, *No prophet is accepted in his own country,* but rather according to the type than the letter; though neither was Jeremiah accepted in Anathoth his country, nor the rest of the Prophets. But it seems rather to be meant that we should say, that the people of the circumcision were the countrymen of all the Prophets. And the Gentiles indeed accepted the prophecy of Jesus Christ, esteeming Moses and the Prophets who preached of Christ, far higher than they who would not from these receive Jesus.

AMBROSE. By a very apt comparison the arrogance of envious citizens is put to shame, and our Lord's conduct shewn to agree with the ancient Scriptures. For it follows, *But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias:* not that the days were his, but that he performed his works in them. CHRYS. He himself, an earthly angel, a heavenly man, who had neither house, nor food, nor clothing like others, carries the keys of the heavens on his tongue. And this is what follows, *When the heaven was shut.* But as soon as he had closed the heavens and made the earth barren, hunger reigned and bodies wasted away, as it follows, *when there was a famine through the land.*

Basil. Hom. 1, 2. de jejun. BASIL. For when he beheld the great disgrace that arose from universal plenty, he brought a famine that the people

might fast, by which he checked their sin which was exceeding great. But crows were made the ministers of food to the righteous, which are wont to steal the food of others. Hom. de fame.

CHRYS. But when the stream was dried up by which the cup of the righteous man was filled, God said, Go to Sarepta, a city of Sidon; there I will command a widow woman to feed you. As it follows, *But to none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow.* And this was brought to pass by a particular appointment of God. For God made Him go a long journey, as far as Sidon, in order that having seen the famine of the country he should ask for rain from the Lord. But there were many rich men at that time, but none of them did any thing like the widow. For in the respect shewn by the woman toward the prophet, consisted her riches not of lands, but of good will. AMBROSE. But he says in a mystery, "In the days of Elias," because Elias brought the day to them who saw in his works the light of spiritual grace, and so the heaven was opened to them that beheld the divine mystery, but was shut when there was famine, because there was no fruitfulness in acknowledging God. But in that widow to whom Elias was sent was prefigured a type of the Church. ORIGEN. For when a famine came upon the people of Israel, i.e. of hearing the word of God, a prophet came to a widow, of whom it is said, *For the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband;* and when he had come, he multiplies her bread and her nourishment. BEDE. Sidonia signifies a vain pursuit, Sarepta fire, or scarcity of bread. By all which things the Gentiles are signified, who, given up to vain pursuits, (following gain and worldly business,) were suffering from the flames of fleshly lusts, and the want of spiritual bread, until Elias, (i.e. the word of prophecy,) now that the interpretation of the Scriptures had ceased because of the faithlessness of the Jews, came to the Church, that being received into the hearts of believers he might feed and refresh them. Chrys. Hom. in Pet. et Eli. Isa. 54, 1. Gal. 4, 27.

BASIL. Every widowed soul, bereft of virtue and divine knowledge, as soon as she receives the divine word, knowing her own failings, learns to nourish it with the bread of virtue, and to water the teaching of virtue from the fountain of life. ORIGEN. He cites also another simil r example, Basil. Hom. in div.

adding, *And there were many lepers in Israel at the time of Eliseus the Prophet, and none of them were cleansed but Naaman the Syrian,* who indeed was not of Israel. Ambrose. Now in a mystery the people pollute the Church, that another people might succeed, gathered together from foreigners, leprous indeed at first before it is baptized in the mystical stream, but which after the sacrament of baptism, washed from the stains of body and soul, begins to be a virgin without spot or wrinkle. Bede. For Naaman, which means beautiful, represents the Gentile people, who is ordered to be washed seven times, because that baptism saves which the seven-fold Spirit renews. His flesh after washing began to appear as a child's, because grace like a mother begets all to one childhood, or because he is conformed to Christ, of whom it is said, *Unto us a child is born.* Isa. 9, 6.

28. And all they in the synagogue when they heard these things, were filled with wrath,

29. And rose up, and thrust Him out of the city, and led Him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast Him down headlong.

30. But He passing through the midst of them went His way.

Cyril. He convicted them of their evil intentions, and therefore they are enraged, and hence what follows, *And all they in the synagogue when they heard these things were filled with wrath.* Because He had said, This day is this prophecy fulfilled, they thought that He compared Himself to the prophets, and are therefore enraged, and expel Him out of their city, as it follows, *And they rose up and cast Him out.*

Ambrose. It cannot be wondered at that they lost their salvation who cast the Saviour out of their city. But the Lord who taught His Apostles by the example of Himself to be all things to all men, neither repels the willing, nor chooses the unwilling; neither struggles against those who cast Him out, nor refuses to hear those who supplicate Him. But that conduct was the result of no slight enmity, which

forgetful of the feelings of fellow citizens, converts the causes of love into the bitterest hatred. For when the Lord Himself was extending His blessings among the people, they began to inflict injuries upon Him, as it follows, *And they led Him unto the brow of the hill, that they might cast Him down.* BEDE. Worse are the Jewish disciples than their master the Devil. For he says, *Cast Thyself down;* they actually attempt to cast Him down. But Jesus having suddenly changed His mind, or seized with astonishment, went away, since He still reserves for them a place of repentance. Hence it follows, *He passing through the midst of them, went His way.* CHRYS. Herein He shews both His human nature, and His divine. To stand in the midst of those who were plotting against Him and not be seized, betokened the loftiness of His divinity; but His departure declared the mystery of the dispensation, i.e. His incarnation. AMBROSE. At the same time we must understand that this bodily endurance was not necessary, but voluntary. When He wills, He is taken; when He wills, He escapes. For how could He be held by a few who was not held by a whole people? But He would have the impiety to be the deed of the many, in order that by a few indeed He might be afflicted, but might die for the whole world. Moreover, He had still rather heal the Jews than destroy them, that by the fruitless issue of their rage they might be dissuaded from wishing what they could not accomplish. BEDE. The hour of His Passion had not yet come, which was to be on the preparation of the Passover, nor had He yet come to the place of His Passion, which not at Nazareth, but at Jerusalem, was prefigured by the blood of the victims; nor had He chosen this kind of death, of whom it was prophesied that He should be crucified by the world.

Chrys. 48. in Joann.

31. And came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the sabbath days.

32. And they were astonished at His doctrine: for His word was with power.

33. And in the synagogue there was a man, which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice,

34. Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with Thee, Thou Jesus of Nazareth? art Thou come to destroy us? I know Thee who Thou art; the Holy One of God.

35. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the devil had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him, and hurt him not.

36. And they were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, What a word is this! for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out.

37. And the fame of Him went out into every place of the country round about.

Ambrose. Neither indignation at their treatment, nor displeasure at their wickedness, caused our Lord to abandon Judæa, but unmindful of His injuries, and remembering mercy, at one time by teaching, at another by healing, He softens the hearts of this unbelieving people, as it is said, *And He went down to Capernaum.* Cyril. For although He knew that they were disobedient and hard of heart, He nevertheless visits them, as a good Physician tries to heal those who are suffering from a mortal disease. But He
Isa. 45, 19. taught them boldly in the synagogues, as Esaias saith, *I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth.* On the sabbath day also He disputed with them, because they were at leisure. They wondered therefore at the mightiness of His teaching, His virtue, and His power, as it follows, *And they were astonished at His doctrine, for His word was with power.* That is, not soothing, but urging and exciting them to seek salvation. Now the Jews supposed Christ to be one of the saints or prophets. But in order that they might esteem Him higher, He passes beyond the prophetic limits. For He said not, "Thus saith the Lord," but being the Master of the Law, He uttered things which were above the Law, changing the letter to the truth, and the figures to the spiritual meaning. Bede. The word of the

teacher is with power, when he performs that which he teaches. But he who by his actions belies what he preaches is despised. CYRIL. But He generally intermingles with His teaching the performance of mighty works. For those whose reason does not incline to knowledge, are roused by the manifestation of miracles. Hence it follows, *And there was in the synagogue a man which had a devil.* AMBROSE. The work of divine healing commenced on the sabbath, signifying thereby that He began anew where the old creation ceased, in order that He might declare at the very beginning that the Son of God was not under the Law, but above the Law. Rightly also He began on the sabbath, that He might shew Himself the Creator, who interweaves His works one within another, and follows up that which He had before begun; just as a builder determining to reconstruct a house, begins to pull down the old one, not from the foundation, but from the top, so as to apply his hand first to that part, where he had before left off. Holy men may through the word of God deliver from evil spirits, but to bid the dead rise again, is the work of Divine power alone.

CYRIL. But the Jews spoke falsely of the glory of Christ, saying, *He casteth out devils by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.* To remove this charge, when the devils came beneath His invincible power, and endured not the Divine Presence, they sent forth a savage cry, as it follows: *And he cried with a loud voice, saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with Thee, &c.* BEDE. As if he said, Abstain a while from troubling me, Thou who hast no fellowship with our designs. AMBROSE. It ought not to shock any one that the devil is mentioned in this book as the first to have spoken the name of Jesus of Nazareth. For Christ received not from Him that name which an Angel brought down from heaven to the Virgin. The devil is of such effrontery, that he is the first to use a thing among men and bring it as something new to them, that he may strike people with terror at his power. Hence it follows: *For I know Thee who Thou art, the Holy One of God.* ATHAN. He spoke of Him not as a *Holy One of God*, as if He were like to the other saints, but as being in a remarkable manner, *the Holy*

Athan. ad Episc. Æg. et Lib.

One, with the addition of the article. For He is by nature holy by partaking of whom all others are called holy. Nor again did he speak this as if he knew it, but he pretended to know it. CYRIL. For the devils thought by praises of this sort to make Him a lover of vainglory, that He might be induced to abstain from opposing or destroying them by way of grateful return.

et Tit. Bost.

CHRYS. The devil wished also to disturb the order of things, and to deprive the Apostles of their dignity, and to incline the many to obey Him. ATHAN. Although he confessed the truth he controlled his tongue, lest with the truth he should also publish his own disgrace, which should teach us not to care for such, although they speak the truth, for we who know the divine Scripture, must not be taught by the devil, as it follows: *And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Be silent, &c.* BEDE. But by the permission of God, the man who was to be delivered from the devil is thrown into the midst, that the power of the Saviour being manifested might bring over many to the way of salvation. As it follows: *And when he had thrown him in the midst.* But this seems to be opposed to Mark, who says, *And the unclean spirit tearing him, and crying with a loud voice, went out of him,* unless we understand that Mark meant by tearing him the same as Luke by these words, *And when he had thrown him in the midst*, so that what follows, *and hurt him not,* might be understood to mean, that that twisting of limbs, and sore troubling, did not weaken him, as is often the case when devils depart from a man, leaving him with limbs cut and torn off. Well then do they wonder at such complete restoration of health. For it follows: *And fear came upon all.* THEOPHYL. As if they said, What is this word by which he commands, Go out, and he went out? BEDE. Holy men were able by the word of God to cast out devils, but the Word Himself does mighty works by His own power. AMBROSE. In a mystery, the man in the synagogue with the unclean spirit is the Jewish people, which being fast bound in the wiles of the devil, defiled its vaunted cleanliness of body by the pollution of the heart. And truly it had an unclean spirit, because it had lost the Holy Spirit. For the devil entered whence Christ had gone out. THEOPHYL.

Athan. ut sup.

We must know also that many now have devils, namely, such as fulfil the desires of devils, as the furious have the dæmon of anger; and so of the rest. But the Lord came into the synagogue when the thoughts of the man were collected, and then says to the dæmon that dwelt there, *Hold thy peace, and immediately throwing him into the middle he departs out of him.* For it becomes not a man always to be angry, (that is, like the brutes,) nor always to be without anger, (for that is want of feeling,) but he must take the middle path, and have anger against what is evil; and so the man is thrown into the midst when the unclean spirit departs from him.

38. And He arose out of the synagogue, and entered into Simon's house. And Simon's wife's mother was taken with a great fever: and they besought Him for her.

39. And He stood over her, and rebuked the fever: and it left her: and immediately she arose and ministered unto them.

AMBROSE. Luke having first introduced a man delivered from an evil spirit, goes on to relate the healing of a woman. For our Lord had come to heal each sex, and he ought first to be healed who was first created. Hence it is said, *And He arose out of the synagogue, and entered into Simon's house.* CHRYS. For He honoured His disciples by dwelling Chrys.
among them, and so making them the more zealous. CYRIL. Hom. 27. in Matt.
Now see how Christ abides in the house of a poor man, suffering poverty of His own will for our sakes, that we might learn to visit the poor, and despise not the destitute and needy. It follows: *And Simon's wife's mother was taken with a great fever: and they besought Him for her.* BEDE. At one time at the request of others, at another of His own accord, our Saviour cures the sick, shewing that He is far aloof from the passions of sinners, and ever grants the prayer of the faithful, and what they in themselves little understand He either makes intelligible, or forgives their not understanding it. As, *Who understands his errors? Lord, cleanse* Ps. 19, 12.

Chrys. ut sup. *me from my secret faults.* Chrys. Because Matthew is silent on the point of asking Him, he does not differ from Luke, or it matters not, for one Gospel had brevity in view, the other accurate research. It follows: *And He stood over her, &c.* Origen. Here Luke speaks figuratively, as of a command given to a sensible being, saying, that the fever was commanded, and neglected not the work of Him who commanded it. Hence it follows: *And she arose and ministered unto them.*

Chrys. ut sup. Chrys. For since the disease was curable, He shewed His power by the manner of the cure, doing what art could never do. For after the allaying of the fever, the patient needs much time ere he be restored to his former health, but at this time all took place at once. Ambrose. But if we weigh these things with deeper thoughts, we shall consider the health of the mind as well as the body; that the mind which was assailed by the wiles of the devil may be released first. Eve was not a hungered before the serpent beguiled her, and therefore against the author of evil himself ought the medicine of salvation first to operate. Perhaps also in that woman as in a type our flesh languished under the various fevers of crimes, nor should I say that the fever of love was less than that of bodily heat. Bede. For if we say that a man released from the devil represents morally the mind cleansed from unclean thoughts, consequently a woman vexed by fever, but cured at our Lord's command, represents the flesh controlled by the rules of continence in the fury of its own lust. Cyril. Let us therefore receive Jesus. For when He has visited us, we carry Him in our heart and mind; He will then extinguish the flames of our unlicensed pleasures, and will make us whole, so that we minister unto Him, that is, do things well-pleasing to Him.

40. Now when the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto Him: and He laid His hands on every one of them, and healed them.

41. And devils also came out of many, crying out, and saying, Thou art Christ the Son of God. And

He rebuking them suffered them not to speak: for they knew that He was Christ.

THEOPHYL. We must observe the zeal of the multitude, who after the sun had set bring their sick unto Him, not deterred by the lateness of the day; as it is said, *Now when the sun was setting, they brought their sick.* ORIGEN. It was ordered about sun-set, that is, when the day was gone, that they should bring them out, either because during the day they were employed about other things, or because they thought that it was not lawful to heal on the sabbath. But He healed them, as it follows, *But He laid His hands upon every one of them.* CYRIL. But although as God He was able to drive away diseases by His word, He nevertheless touches them, shewing that His flesh was powerful to apply remedies, since it was the flesh of God; for as fire, when applied to a brazen vessel, imprints on it the effect of its own heat, so the omnipotent Word of God, when He united to Himself in real assumption a living virgin temple, endued with understanding, implanted in it a participation of His own power. May He also touch us, nay rather may we touch Him, that He may deliver us from the infirmities of our souls as well as the assaults of the evil spirit and pride! For it follows, *And devils also came out.* BEDE. The devils confess the Son of God, and as it is afterwards said, *they knew Him to be Christ;* for when the devil saw Him distressed by fasting, he perceived Him to be truly man, but when he prevailed not in his trial he doubted whether or not He were the Son of God, but now by the power of Christ's miracles he either perceived or suspected Him to be the Son of God. He did not then persuade the Jews to crucify Him because he thought Him not to be Christ or the Son of God, but because he did not foresee that by this death he himself would be condemned. Of this mystery hidden from the world the Apostle says, that none of the princes of this world knew, for if they had known they would never have crucified the Lord of Glory. CHRYS. But in what follows, *And He rebuking them suffered them not to speak,* mark the humility of Christ, who would not let the unclean spirits make Him manifest. For it was not fit that

1 Cor. 2, 8.

they should usurp the glory of the Apostolical office, nor did it become the mysteries of Christ to be made public by impure tongues. THEOPHYL. Because, "praise is not seemly in the mouth of a sinner." Or, because He did not wish to inflame the envy of the Jews by being praised of all. BEDE. But the Apostles themselves are commanded to be silent concerning Him, lest by proclaiming His divine Majesty, the dispensation of His Passion should be delayed.

42. And when it was day, He departed and went into a desert place: and the people sought Him, and came unto Him, and stayed Him, that He should not depart from them.

43. And He said unto them, I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent.

44. And He preached in the synagogues of Galilee.

CHRYS. When He had bestowed sufficient favour upon the people by miracles, it was necessary for Him to depart. For miracles are always thought greater when the worker is gone, since they themselves are then the more heeded, and have in their turn a voice; as it is said, *But when it was day, He departed, and went.* GREEK EX. He went also into the desert, as Mark says, and prayed; not that He needed prayer, but as an example to us of good works. CHRYS. The Pharisees indeed, seeing how that the miracles themselves published His fame, were offended at His power. But the people hearing His words, assented and followed; as it is said, *And the multitudes sought Him,* not indeed any of the chief priests, or scribes, but all those who had not been blackened with the dark stain of malice, and preserved their consciences unhurt. GREEK EX. Now when Mark says that the Apostles came to Him, saying, *All seek Thee,* but Luke, that the people came, there is no difference between them, for the people came to Him following in the footsteps of the Apostles. But the Lord rejoiced in being held back, yet bid them let Him go, that others also might partake of His

Victor Antiochenus.

Chrys. Hom. 25. in Matt.

ut sup.

teaching, as the time of His presence would not last long; as it follows, *And He said unto them, I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also, &c.* Mark says, *Unto this I came,* shewing the loftiness of His divine nature, and His voluntary emptying Himself of it. But Luke says, *Unto this am I sent,* shewing His incarnation, and calling also the decree of the Father, *a sending Him forth;* and one simply says, *To preach,* the other added, *the kingdom of God,* which is Christ Himself. CHRYS. Observe also, that He might, by abiding in the same place, have drawn all men over to Himself. He did not however do so, giving us an example to go about and seek those who are perishing, as the shepherd his lost sheep, and as the physician the sick. For by recovering one soul, we may be able to blot out a thousand sins. Hence also it follows, *And He was preaching in the synagogues of Galilee.* He frequently indeed went to the synagogues, to shew them that He was no deceiver. For if He were constantly to dwell in the desolate places, they would spread abroad that He was concealing Himself. BEDE. But if the sun-setting mystically expresses the death of our Lord, the returning day denotes His resurrection, (the light of which being made manifest, He is sought for by the multitudes of believers, and being found in the desert of the Gentiles He is held back by them, lest He should depart;) especially as this took place on the first day of the week, on which day the Resurrection was celebrated.

Chrys. Hom. 48. in Matt.

CHAP. V.

1. And it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon Him to hear the word of God, He stood by the lake of Gennesaret,

2. And saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets.

3. And He entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And He sat down, and taught the people out of the ship.

AMBROSE. When the Lord had performed many and various kinds of cures, the multitude began to heed neither time nor place in their desire to be healed. The evening came, they followed; a lake is before them, they still press on; as it is said, *And it came to pass, as the people pressed upon Him.* CHRYS. For they clung to Him with love and admiration, and longed to keep Him with them. For who would depart while He performed such miracles? who would not be content to see only His face, and the mouth that uttered such things? Nor as performing miracles only was He an object of admiration, but His whole appearance was overflowing with grace. Therefore when He speaks, they listen to Him in silence, interrupting not the chain of His discourse; for it is said, *that they might hear the word of God, &c.* It follows, *And He stood near the lake of Gennesaret.* BEDE. The lake of Gennesaret is said to be the same as the sea of Galilee or the sea of Tiberias; but it is called the sea of Galilee from the adjacent province,

Chrys. Hom. 25. in Matt.

the sea of Tiberias from a neighbouring city. Gennesaret, however, is the name given it from the nature of the lake itself, (which is thought from its crossing waves to raise a breeze upon itself,) being the Greek expression for "making a breeze to itself." For the water is not steady like that of a lake, but constantly agitated by the breezes blowing over it. It is sweet to the taste and wholesome to drink. In the Hebrew tongue, any extent of water, whether it be sweet or salt, is called a sea. THEOPHYL. But the Lord seeks to avoid glory the more it followed Him, and therefore separating Himself from the multitude, He entered into a ship, as it is said, *And He saw two ships standing near the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets.* CHRYS. This was a sign of leisure, but according to Matthew He finds them mending their nets. For so great was their poverty, that they patched up their old nets, not being able to buy new ones. But our Lord was very desirous to collect the multitudes that none might remain behind, but they might all behold Him face to face; He therefore enters into a ship, as it is said, *And He entered into a ship, which was Simon's, and prayed him.* THEOPHYL. Behold the gentleness of Christ; He asks Peter; and the willingness of Peter, who was obedient in all things. CHRYS. After having performed many miracles, He again commences His teaching, and being on the sea, He fishes for those who were on the shore. Hence it follows, *And He sat down and taught the people out of the ship.* GREG. NAZ. Condescending to all, in order that He might draw forth a fish from the deep, i.e. man swimming in the everchanging scenes and bitter storms of this life. BEDE. Now mystically, the two ships represent circumcision and uncircumcision. The Lord sees these, because in each people He knows who are His, and by seeing, i.e. by a merciful visitation, He brings them nearer the tranquillity of the life to come. The fishermen are the doctors of the Church, because by the net of faith they catch us, and bring us as it were ashore to the land of the living. But these nets are at one time spread out for catching fish, at another washed and folded up. For every time is not fitted for teaching, but at one time the teacher must speak with the tongue, and at another time we must discipline our-

quasi a γεννάω et ἀήρ.

Greg. Orat. 37.

selves. The ship of Simon is the primitive Church, of Gal. 2, 8. which St. Paul says, *He that wrought effectually in Peter to* Acts 4, 32. *the Apostleship of circumcision.* The ship is well called one, for in the multitude of believers there was one heart and one Aug. de Quæst. Ev. l. 2. c. 2. soul. AUG. From which ship He taught the multitude, for by the authority of the Church He teaches the Gentiles. But the Lord entering the ship, and asking Peter to put off a little from the land, signifies that we must be moderate in our words to the multitude, that they may be neither taught earthly things, nor from earthly things rush into the depths of the sacraments. Or, the Gospel must first be preached to the neighbouring countries of the Gentiles that (as He afterwards says, *Launch out into the deep,*) He might command it to be preached afterwards to the more distant nations.

4. Now when He had left speaking, He said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.

5. And Simon answering said unto Him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at Thy word, I will let down the net.

6. And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake.

7. And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink.

CYRIL. Having sufficiently taught the people, He returns again to His mighty works, and by the employment of fishing fishes for His disciples. Hence it follows, *When He had left off speaking, He said unto Simon, Launch out into the* Chrys. Hom. 6. in Matt. *deep, and let down your nets for a draught.* CHRYS. For in His condescension to men, He called the wise men by a star, the fishermen by their art of fishing. THEOPHYL. Peter did not refuse to comply, as it follows, *And Simon answering said unto Him, Master, we have toiled all night, and have taken nothing.* He did not go on to say, "I will not hearken

to Thee, nor expose myself to additional labour," but rather adds, *Nevertheless, at Thy word, I will let down the net.* But our Lord, since He had taught the people out of the ship, left not the master of the ship without reward, but conferred on him a double kindness, giving him first a multitude of fishes, and next making him His disciple: as it follows, *And when they had done this, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes.* They took so many fishes that they could not pull them out, but sought the assistance of their companions; as it follows, *But their net brake, and they beckoned to their partners who were in the other ship, to come, &c.* Peter summons them by a sign, being unable to speak from astonishment at the draught of fishes. We next hear of their assistance, *And they came, and filled both the ships.* AUG. John seems indeed to speak of a similar miracle, but this is very different from the one he mentions. That took place after our Lord's resurrection, at the lake of Tiberias, and not only the time, but the miracle itself is very different. For in the latter the nets being let down on the right side took one hundred and fifty-three fishes, and these of large size, which it was necessary for the Evangelist to mention, because though so large the nets were not broken, and this would seem to have reference to the event which Luke relates, when from the multitude of the fishes the nets were broken.

Aug. de Con. Ev. lib. 4. c. 6.

AMBROSE. Now in a mystery, the ship of Peter, according to Matthew, is beaten about by the waves, according to Luke is filled with fishes, in order that you might understand the Church at first wavering, at last abounding. The ship is not shaken which holds Peter; that is which holds Judas. In each was Peter; but he who trusts in his own merits is disquieted by another's. Let us beware then of a traitor, lest through one we should many of us be tossed about. Trouble is found there where faith is weak, safety here where love is perfect. Lastly, though to others it is commanded, *Let down your nets*, to Peter alone it is said, *Launch out into the deep*, i.e. into deep researches. What is so deep, as the knowledge of the Son of God! But what are the nets of the Apostles which are ordered to be let down, but the interweaving of words and certain folds, as it were, of speech, and intricacies

Matt. 8, 24.

of argument, which never let those escape whom they have once caught. And rightly are nets the Apostolical instruments for fishing, which kill not the fish that are caught, but keep them safe, and bring up those that are tossing about in the waves from the depths below to the regions above. But he says, *Master, we have toiled the whole night and have caught nothing;* for this is not the work of human eloquence but the gift of divine calling. But they who had before caught nothing, at the word of the Lord inclosed a great multitude of fishes. CYRIL. Now this was a figure of the future. For they will not labour in vain who let down the net of evangelical doctrine, but will gather together the shoals of the Gentiles.

Aug. ut sup.

AUG. Now the circumstance of the nets breaking, and the ships being filled with the multitude of fishes, so that they began to sink, signifies that there will be in the Church so great a multitude of carnal men, that unity will be broken up, and it will be split into heresies and schisms. BEDE. The net is broken, but the fish escape not, for the Lord preserves His own amid the violence of persecutors. AMBROSE. But the other ship is Judæa, out of which James and John are chosen. These then came from the synagogue to the ship of Peter in the Church, that they might fill both ships. For at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, whether Jew or Greek. BEDE. Or the other ship is the Church of the Gentiles, which itself also (one ship being not sufficient) is filled with chosen fishes. For the Lord knows who are His, and with Him the number of His elect is sure. And when He finds not in Judæa so many believers as He knows are destined to eternal life, He seeks as it were another ship to receive His fishes, and fills the hearts of the Gentiles also with the grace of faith. And well when the net brake did they call to their assistance the ship of their companions, since the traitor Judas, Simon Magus, Ananias and Sapphira, and many of the disciples, went back. And then Barnabas and Paul were separated for the Apostleship of the Gentiles. AMBROSE. We may understand also by the other ship another Church, since from one Church several are derived. CYRIL. But Peter beckons to his companions to help them. For many follow the labours of the Apostles, and first those who

brought out the writings of the Gospels, next to whom are the other heads and shepherds of the Gospel, and those skilled in the teaching of the truth. BEDE. But the filling of these ships goes on until the end of the world. But the fact that the ships, when filled, begin to sink, i.e. become weighed low down in the water; (for they are not sunk, but are in great danger,) the Apostle explains when he says, *In the last days perilous times shall come; men shall be lovers of their own selves, &c.* For the sinking of the ships is when men, by vicious habits, fall back into that world from which they have been elected by faith. 2 Tim. 3, 1. 2.

8. When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.

9. For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken:

10. And so was also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.

11. And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed Him.

BEDE. Peter was astonished at the divine gift, and the more he feared, the less did he now presume; as it is said, *When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.* CYRIL. For calling back to his consciousness the crimes he had committed, he is alarmed and trembles, and as being unclean, he believes it impossible he can receive Him who is clean, for he had learnt from the law to distinguish between what is defiled and holy. GREG. NYSS. When Christ commanded to let down the nets, the multitude of the fishes taken was just as great as the Lord of the sea and land willed. For the voice of the Word is the voice of power, at whose bidding at the beginning of the world light and

the other creatures came forth. At these things Peter wonders, *for he was astonished, and all that were with him, &c.* AUG. He does not mention Andrew by name, who however is thought to have been in that ship, according to the accounts of Matthew and Mark. It follows, *And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not.* AMBROSE. Say thou also, *Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord,* that God may answer, *Fear not.* Confess thy sin, and the Lord will pardon thee. See how good the Lord is, who gives so much to men, that they have the power of making alive. As it follows, *From henceforth thou shalt catch men.* BEDE. This especially belongs to Peter himself, for the Lord explains to him what this taking of fish means; that in fact as now he takes fishes by the net, so hereafter he will catch men by words. And the whole order of this event shews what is daily going on in the Church, of which Peter is the type. CHRYS. But mark their faith and obedience. For though they were eagerly engaged in the employment of fishing, yet when they heard the command of Jesus, they delayed not, but forsook all and followed Him. Such is the obedience which Christ demands of us; we must not forego it, even though some great necessity urges us. Hence it follows, *And having brought their ships to land.* AUG. Matthew and Mark here briefly state the matter, and how it was done. Luke explains it more at large. There seems however to be this difference, that he makes our Lord to have said to Peter only, *From henceforth thou shalt catch men,* whereas they related it as having been spoken to both the others. But surely it might have been said at first to Peter, when he marvelled at the immense draught of fishes, as Luke suggests, and afterwards to both, as the other two have related it. Or we must understand the event to have taken place as Luke relates, and that the others were not then called by the Lord, but only it was foretold to Peter that he should catch men, not that he should no more be employed in fishing; and hence there is room for supposing that they returned to their fishing, so that afterwards that might happen which Matthew and Mark speak of. For then the ships were not brought to land, as if with the intention of returning, but they followed Him as calling or commanding them to come.

Aug. de Con. Ev. lib. ii. 17.

Chrys. Hom. 14. in Matt.

Aug. ubi sup.

Matt. 4, 20. Mark 1, 18.

But if according to John, Peter and Andrew followed Him close by Jordan, how do the other Evangelists say that He found them fishing in Galilee, and called them to the discipleship? Except we understand that they did not see the Lord near Jordan so as to join Him inseparably, but knew only who He was, and marvelling at Him returned to their own.

AMBROSE. But mystically, those whom Peter takes by his word, he claims not as his own booty or his own gift. *Depart,* he says, *from me, O Lord.* Fear not then also to ascribe what is thy own to the Lord, for what was His He has given to us. AUG. Or, Peter speaks in the character of the Church full of carnal men, *Depart from me, for I am a sinful man.* As if the Church, crowded with carnal men, and almost sunk by their vices, throws off from it, as it were, the rule in spiritual things, wherein the character of Christ chiefly shines forth. For not with the tongue do men tell the good servants of God that they should depart from them, but with the utterance of their deeds and actions they persuade them to go away, that they may not be governed by the good. And yet all the more anxiously do they hasten to pay honours to them, just as Peter testified his respect by falling at the feet of our Lord, but his conduct in saying, *Depart from me.* BEDE. But the Lord allays the fears of carnal men, that no one trembling at the consciousness of his guilt, or astonished at the innocence of others, might be afraid to undertake the journey of holiness.

Aug. de Quæst. Ev. lib ii. c. 2.

AUG. But the Lord did not depart from them, shewing thereby that good and spiritual men, when they are troubled by the wickedness of the many, ought not to wish to abandon their ecclesiastical duties, that they might live as it were a more secure and tranquil life. But the bringing their ships to land, and forsaking all to follow Jesus, may represent the end of time, when those who have clung to Christ shall altogether depart from the storms of this world.

Aug. ubi sup.

12. And it came to pass, when He was in a certain city, behold a man full of leprosy: who seeing Jesus fell on his face, and besought Him, saying, Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean.

13. And He put forth His hand, and touched him, saying, I will: be thou clean. And immediately the leprosy departed from him.

14. And He charged him to tell no man: but go, and shew thyself to the Priest, and offer for thy cleansing, according as Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

15. But so much the more went there a fame abroad of Him: and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by Him of their infirmities.

16. And He withdrew Himself into the wilderness, and prayed.

Ambrose. The fourth miracle after Jesus came to Capernaum was the healing of a leprous man. But since he illumined the fourth day with the sun, and made it more glorious than the rest, we ought to think this work more glorious than those that went before; of which it is said, *And it came to pass, when He was in a certain city, behold a man full of leprosy.* Rightly no definite place is mentioned where the leprous man was healed, to signify that not one people of any particular city, but all nations were healed. Athan. Now the leper worshipped the Lord God in His bodily form, and thought not the Word of God to be a creature because of His flesh, nor because He was the Word did he think lightly of the flesh which He put on; nay rather in a created temple he adored the Creator of all things, falling down on his face, as it follows, *And when he saw Jesus he fell on his face, and besought Him.* Ambrose. In falling upon his face he marked his humility and modesty, for every one should blush at the stains of his life, but his reverence kept not back his confession, he shews his wound, and asks for a remedy, saying, *If Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean.* Of the will of the Lord he doubted, not from distrust of His mercy, but checked by the consciousness of his own unworthiness. But the confession is one full of devotion and faith, placing all power in the will of the Lord. Cyril. For he knew that leprosy yields not to the skill of physicians,

Athan. Ep. ad Adelph. 3.

but he saw the devils cast out by the Divine authority, and multitudes cured of divers diseases, all which he conceived was the work of the Divine arm. TITUS BOST. Let us learn from the words of the leper not to go about seeking the cure of our bodily infirmities, but to commit the whole to the will of God, who knows what is best for us, and disposes all things as He will. AMBROSE. He heals in the same manner in which He had been entreated to heal, as it follows, *And Jesus put forth His hand, and touched him, &c.* The law forbids to touch the leprous man, but He who is the Lord of the law submits not to the law, but makes the law; He did not touch because without touching He was unable to make him clean, but to shew that He was neither subject to the law, nor feared the contagion as man; for He could not be contaminated who delivered others from the pollution. On the other hand, He touched also, that the leprosy might be expelled by the touch of the Lord, which was wont to contaminate him that touched. THEOPHYL. For His sacred flesh has a healing, and life-giving power, as being indeed the flesh of the Word of God. AMBROSE. In the words which follow, *I will, be thou clean,* you have the will, you have also the result of His mercy. CYRIL. From majesty alone proceeds the royal command, how then is the Only-begotten counted among the servants, who by His mere will can do all things? We read of God the Father, that He hath done all things whatsoever He pleased. But He who exercises the power of His Father, how can He differ from Him in nature? Besides, whatsoever things are of the same power, are wont to be of the same substance. Again; let us then admire in these things Christ working both divinely and bodily. For it is of God so to will that all things are done accordingly, but of man to stretch forth the hand. From two natures therefore is perfected one Christ, for that *the Word was made flesh.* GREG. NYSS. And because the Deity is united with each portion of man, i.e. both soul and body, in each are evident the signs of a heavenly nature. For the body declared the Deity hidden in it, when by touching it afforded a remedy, but the soul, by the mighty power of its will, marked the Divine strength. For as the sense of touch is the property of the body, so the motion of

Cyril. Thes. 12. c. 14.

Ps. 115, 3; 135, 6.

Greg. Orat. 1. in Resur. Christ.

the will of the soul. The soul wills, the body touches. AMBROSE. He says then, *I will*, for Photinus, He commands, for Arius, He touches, for Manichæus. But there is nothing intervening between God's work and His command, that we may see in the inclination of the healer the power of the work. Hence it follows, *And immediately the leprosy departed from him.* But lest leprosy should become rife among us, let each avoid boasting after the example of our Lord's humility. For it follows, *And He commanded him that he should tell it to no one*, that in truth he might teach us that our good deeds are not to be made public, but to be rather concealed, that we should abstain not only from gaining money, but even favour. Or perhaps the cause of His commanding silence was that He thought those to be preferred, who had rather believed of their own accord than from the hope of benefit. CYRIL. Though the leper was silent, the voice of the transaction itself was sufficient to publish it to all who acknowledged through him the power of the Curer.

Chrys. Hom. 26. in Matt. CHRYS. And since frequently men, when they are sick, remember God, but when they recover, wax dull, He bids him to always keep God before his eyes, giving glory to God. Hence it follows, *But go and shew thyself to the Priest*, in order that the leprous man being cleansed might submit himself to the inspection of the Priest, and so by his sanction be counted as healed. AMBROSE. And that the Priest also should know that not by the order of the law, but by the grace of God above the law, he was cured. And since a sacrifice is commanded by the regulation of Moses, the Lord shews that He does not abrogate the law, but fulfil it. As it follows, *And offer for thy cleansing according as Moses commanded.* Aug. de Qu. Ev. l. ii. qu. 3. AUG. He seems here to approve of the sacrifice which had been commanded through Moses, though the Church does not require it. It may therefore be understood to have been commanded, because not as yet had commenced that most holy sacrifice which is His body. For it was not fitting that typical sacrifices should be taken away before that which was typified should be confirmed by the witness of the Apostles' preaching, and the faith of believers. AMBROSE. Or because the law is spiritual He seems to have commanded a spiritual sacrifice. Hence He

said, *As Moses commanded.* Lastly, He adds, *for a testimony unto them.* The heretics understand this erroneously, saying, that it was meant as a reproach to the law. But how would He order an offering for cleansing, according to Moses' commandments, if He meant this against the law? CYRIL. He says then, *for a testimony unto them,* because this deed makes manifest that Christ in His incomparable excellence is far above Moses. For when Moses could not rid his sister of the leprosy, he prayed the Lord to deliver her. But the Saviour, in His divine power, declared, *I will, be thou clean.* Numb. 12, 13.

CHRYS. Or, for a testimony against them, i.e. as a reproof of them, and a testimony that I respect the law. For now too that I have cured thee, I send thee for the examination of the priests, that thou shouldest bear me witness that I have not played false to the law. And although the Lord in giving out remedies advised telling them to no one, instructing us to avoid pride; yet His fame flew about every where, instilling the miracle into the ears of every one, as it follows, *But so much the more went there a fame abroad of Him.* BEDE. Now the perfect healing of one brings many multitudes to the Lord, as it follows, *And great multitudes came together that they should be healed.* For the leprous man that he might shew both his outward and inward cure, even though forbid ceases not, as Mark says, to tell of the benefit he had received. GREG. Our Redeemer performs His miracles by day, and passes the night in prayer, as it follows, *And He withdrew Himself into the wilderness, and prayed,* hinting, as it were, to perfect preachers, that as neither they should entirely desert the active life from love of contemplation, so neither should they despise the joys of contemplation from an excess of activity, but in silent thought imbibe that which they might afterwards give back in words to their neighbours. BEDE. Now that He retired to pray, you would not ascribe to that nature which says, *I will, be thou clean,* but to that which putting forth the hand touched the leprous man, not that according to Nestorius there is a double person of the Son, but of the same person, as there are two natures, so are there two operations. GREG. NAZ. And His works He indeed performed among

Chrys. ubi sup. Greg. Mor. xxviii. c. 13. Greg. 26.

the people, but He prayed for the most part in the wilderness, sanctioning the liberty of resting a while from labour to hold converse with God with a pure heart. For He needed no change or retirement, since there was nothing which could be relaxed in Him, nor any place in which He might confine Himself, for He was God, but it was that we might clearly know that there is a time for action, a time for each higher occupation. BEDE. How typically the leprous man represents the whole race of man, languishing with sins full of
Rom. 3, 23. leprosy, *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God;* that so by the hand put forth, i.e. the word of God partaking of human nature, they might be cleansed from the vanity of their old errors, and offer for cleansing their bodies as a living sacrifice. AMBROSE. But if the word is the healing of leprosy, the contempt of the word is the leprosy of the mind. THEOPHYL. But mark, that after a man has been cleansed he is then worthy to offer this gift, namely, the body and blood of the Lord, which is united to the Divine nature.

17. And it came to pass on a certain day, as He was teaching, that there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judæa, and Jerusalem: and the power of the Lord was present to heal them.

18. And, behold, men brought in a bed a man which was taken with a palsy: and they sought means to bring him in, and to lay him before Him.

19. And when they could not find by what way they might bring him in because of the multitude, they went upon the housetop, and let him down through the tiling with his couch into the midst before Jesus.

20. And when He saw their faith, He said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee.

21. And the Scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?

22. But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, He answering said unto them, What reason ye in your hearts?

23. Whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Rise up and walk?

24. But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, (He said unto the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go unto thine house.

25. And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God.

26. And they were all amazed, and they glorified God, and were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things to-day.

CYRIL. The Scribes and Pharisees who had become spectators of Christ's miracles, heard Him also teaching. Hence it is said, *And it came to pass on a certain day, as He was teaching, that there were Pharisees sitting by, &c. And the power of the Lord was present to heal them.* Not as though He borrowed the power of another, but as God and the Lord He healed by His own inherent power. Now men often become worthy of spiritual gifts, but generally depart from the rule which the giver of the gifts knew. It was not so with Christ, for the divine power went on abounding in giving remedies. But because it was necessary where so great a number of Scribes and Pharisees had come together, that something should be done to attest His power before those men who slighted Him, He performed the miracle on the man with the palsy, who since medical art seemed to fail, was carried by his kinsfolk to a higher and heavenly Physician. As it follows, *And behold men brought him.* CHRYS. But they are to be admired who brought in the paralytic, since on finding that they could not enter in at the door, they attempted a new and untried way. As it follows, *And when they could not find by what way they might bring him in, they went upon the housetop, &c.* But

unroofing the house they let down the couch, and place the paralytic in the midst, as it follows, *And they let him down through the tilings.* Some one may say, that the place was let down, from which they lowered the couch of the palsied man through the tilings. BEDE. The Lord about to cure the man of his palsy, first loosens the chains of his sins, that He may shew him, that on account of the bonds of his sins, he is punished with the loosening of his joints, and that unless the former are set free, he cannot be healed to the recovery of his limbs. Hence it follows, *And when He saw their faith, &c.* AMBROSE. Mighty is the Lord who pardons one man for the good deed of another, and while He approves of the one, forgives the other his sins. Why, O man, with thee does not thy fellow man prevail, when with God a servant has both the liberty to intercede in thy behalf, and the power of obtaining what he asks? If thou despairest of the pardon of heavy sins, bring the prayers of others, bring the Church to pray for thee, and at sight of this the Lord may pardon what man denies to thee.

Chrys. Hom. 29. in Matt.

CHRYS. But there was combined in this the faith also of the sufferer himself. For he would not have submitted to be let down, had he not believed.

Aug. de Con. Ev. lib. ii. c. 25.

AUG. But our Lord's saying, *Man, thy sins are forgiven,* conveys the meaning that the man had his sins forgiven him, because in that he was man, he could not say, "I have not sinned," but at the same time also, that He who forgave sins might be known to be God. CHRYS. Now if we suffer bodily, we are enough concerned to get rid of the hurtful thing; but when there has harm happened to the soul, we delay, and so are neither cured of our bodily ailments. Let us then remove the fountain of evil, and the waters of sickness will cease to flow. But from fear of the multitude, the Pharisees durst not openly expose their designs, but only meditated them in their hearts. Hence it follows, *And they began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies?*

Chrys. ubi sup.

CYRIL. By this they hasten the sentence of death, for it was commanded in the law, that whoever blasphemed God should be punished with death. AMBROSE. From His very works therefore the Son of God receives testimony. For it is both more powerful evidence when men confess unwillingly,

Lev. 24, 16.

and a more fatal error when they who deny are left to the consequence of their own assertions. Hence it follows, *Who can forgive sins, but God only?* Great is the madness of an unbelieving people, who though they have confessed that it is of God alone to forgive sins, believe not God when He forgives sins. BEDE. For they say true, that no one can forgive sins but God, who yet forgives through those to whom He gives the power of forgiving. And therefore Christ is proved to be truly God, for He is able to forgive sins as God. AMBROSE. The Lord wishing to save sinners shews Himself to be God, by His knowledge of the secret thoughts; as it follows, *But that ye may know.* CYRIL. As if to say, O Pharisees, since ye say, *Who can forgive sins, but God alone?* I answer you, Who can search the secrets of the heart, but God alone, who says by His prophet, *I am the* Jer. 17, 10.
Lord, that searcheth the hearts, and trieth the reins. CHRYS. Chrys.
If then you disbelieve the first, (i.e. the forgiveness of sins,) ubi sup.
behold, I add another, seeing that I lay open your inmost thoughts. Again, another that I make whole the body of the palsied man. Hence He adds, *Whether is it easier?* It is very plain that it is easier to restore the body to health. For as the soul is far nobler than the body, so is the forgiveness of sins more excellent than the healing of the body. But since you believe not the former, because it is hid; I will add that which is inferior, yet more open, in order that thereby that which is secret may be made manifest. And indeed in addressing the sick man, He said not, I forgive thee thy sins, expressing His own power, but, *Thy sins are forgiven thee.* But they compelled Him to declare more plainly His own power to them, when He said, *But that you may know.* THEOPHYL. Observe that on earth He forgives sins. For while we are on earth we can blot out our sins. But after that we are taken away from the earth, we shall not be able to confess, for the gate is shut. CHRYS. He Chrys.
shews the pardon of sins by the healing of the body. Hence ubi sup.
it follows, *He says unto the sick of the palsy, I say unto thee, Rise.* But He manifests the healing of the body by the carrying of the bed, that so that which took place might be accounted no shadow. Hence it follows, *Take up thy bed.* As if He said, "I was willing through thy suffering to cure

those who think that they are in health, while their souls are sick, but since they are unwilling, go and correct thy household." AMBROSE. Nor is there any delay, health is present; there is but one moment both of words, and healing. Hence it follows, *And immediately he rose.* From this fact it is evident, that the Son of man has power on earth to forgive sins; He said this both for Himself and us. For He as God made man, as the Lord of the law forgives sins; we also have been chosen to receive from Him the same marvellous grace. For it was said to the disciples, *Whose sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them.* But how does He not Himself forgive sins, who has given to others the power of doing so? But the kings and princes of the earth when they acquit homicides, release them from their present punishment, but cannot expiate their crimes.

John 20, 23.

AMBROSE. They behold him rising up, still disbelieving, and marvel at his departing; as it follows, *And they were all amazed.* CHRYS. The Jews creep on by degrees, glorifying God, yet thinking Him not God, for His flesh stood in their way. But still it was no slight thing to consider Him the chief of mortal men, and to have proceeded from God. AMBROSE. But they had rather fear the miracles of divine working, than believe them. As it follows, *And they were filled with fear.* But if they had believed they had not surely feared, but loved; for perfect love casteth out fear. But this was no careless or trifling cure of the paralytic, since our Lord is said to have prayed first, not for the petition's sake, but for an example. AUG. With respect to the sick of the palsy, we may understand that the soul relaxed in its limbs, i.e. its operations, seeks Christ, i.e. the meaning of God's word; but is hindered by the crowds, that is to say, unless it discovers the secrets of the thoughts, i.e. the dark parts of the Scriptures, and thereby arrives at the knowledge of Christ. BEDE. And the house where Jesus was is well described as covered with tiles, since beneath the beggarly covering of letters is found the spiritual power of grace. AMBROSE. Now let every sick person have those that will pray for his salvation, by whom the loosened joints of our life and halting steps may be renewed by the remedy of the heavenly word. Let there be then certain monitors of the

Chrys. ubi sup.

Aug. l. ii. qu. 4.

soul, to raise the mind of man, though grown dull through the weakness of the external body, to higher things, by the aid of which being able again easily to raise and humble itself, it may be placed before Jesus worthy to be presented in the Lord's sight. For the Lord beholdeth the humble. AUG. The men then by whom he is let down may signify the doctors of the Church. But that he is let down with the couch, signifies that Christ ought to be known by man, while yet abiding in his flesh. AMBROSE. But the Lord, pointing out the full hope of resurrection, pardons the sins of the soul, sets aside the weakness of the flesh. For this is the curing of the whole man. Although then it is a great thing to forgive the sins of men, it is yet much more divine to give resurrection to the bodies, since indeed God is the resurrection. But the bed which is ordered to be taken up is nothing else but the human body. AUG. That the infirm soul may no more rest in carnal joys, as in a bed, but rather itself restrain the carnal affections, and tend toward its own home, i.e. the resting-place of the secrets of its heart. AMBROSE. Or it may re-seek its own home, i.e. return to Paradise, for that is its true home, which first received man, and was lost not fairly, but by treachery. Rightly then is the soul restored thither, since He has come who will undo the treacherous knot, and re-establish righteousness.

Aug. ubi sup.

Aug. ubi sup.

27. And after these things He went forth, and saw a Publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and He said unto him, Follow Me.

28. And he left all, rose up, and followed Him.

29. And Levi made Him a great feast in his own house: and there was a great company of Publicans and of others that sat down with them.

30. But their Scribes and Pharisees murmured against His disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with Publicans and sinners?

31. And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick.

32. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Aug. de Con. Ev. l. ii. c. 26.

AUG. After the healing of the sick of the palsy, St. Luke goes on to mention the conversion of a publican, saying, *And after these things, He went forth, and saw a publican of the name of Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom.* This is Matthew, also called Levi. BEDE. Now Luke and Mark, for the honour of the Evangelist, are silent as to his common name, but Matthew is the first to accuse himself, and gives the name of Matthew and publican, that no one might despair of salvation because of the enormity of his sins, when he himself was changed from a publican to an Apostle. CYRIL. For Levi had been a publican, a rapacious man, of unbridled desires after vain things, a lover of other men's goods, for this is the character of the publican, but snatched from the very worship of malice by Christ's call. Hence it follows, *And He said unto him, Follow Me.* He bids him follow Him, not with bodily step, but with the soul's affections. Matthew therefore, being called by the Word, left his own, who was wont to seize the things of others, as it follows, *And having left all, he rose, and followed Him.*

Chrys. Hom. 30. in Matt.

CHRYS. Here mark both the power of the caller, and the obedience of him that was called. For he neither resisted nor wavered, but forthwith obeyed; and like the fishermen, he did not even wish to go into his own house that he might tell it to his friends.

Basil. Reg. fus. tract. 8.

BASIL. He not only gave up the profits of the customs, but also despised the dangers which might occur to himself and his family from leaving the accounts of the receipts uncompleted. THEOPHYL. And so from him that received toll from the passers by, Christ received toll, not money, but entire devotion to His company.

Chrys. ubi sup.

CHRYS. But the Lord honoured Levi, whom He had called, by immediately going to his feast. For this testified the greater confidence in him. Hence it follows, *And Levi made Him a great feast in his own house.* Nor did He sit down to meat with him alone, but with many, as it follows, *And there was a great company of Publicans and others that sat down with them.* For the publicans came to Levi as to their colleague, and

a man in the same line with themselves, and he too glorying in the presence of Christ, called them all together. For Christ displayed every sort of remedy, and not only by discoursing and displaying cures, or even by rebuking the envious, but also by eating with them, He corrected the faults of some, thereby giving us a lesson, that every time and occasion brings with it its own profit. But He shunned not the company of publicans, for the sake of the advantage that might ensue, like a physician, who unless he touch the afflicted part cannot cure the disease. AMBROSE. For by His eating with sinners, He prevents not us also from going to a banquet with the Gentiles. CHRYS. But nevertheless the Lord was blamed by the Pharisees, who were envious, and wished to separate Christ and His disciples, as it follows, *And the Pharisees murmured, saying, Why do you eat with Publicans, &c.* AMBROSE. This was the voice of the Devil. This was the first word the Serpent uttered to Eve, *Yea hath God said, Ye shall not eat?* So they diffuse the poison of their father. AUG. Now St. Luke seems to have related this somewhat different from the other Evangelists. For he does not say that to our Lord alone it was objected that He ate and drank with publicans and sinners, but to the disciples also, that the charge might be understood both of Him and them. But the reason that Matthew and Mark related the objection as made concerning Christ to His disciples, was, that seeing the disciples ate with publicans and sinners, it was the rather objected to their Master as Him whom they followed and imitated; the meaning therefore is the same, yet so much the better conveyed, as while still keeping to the truth, it differs in certain words. CHRYS. But our Lord refutes all their charges, shewing, that so far from its being a fault to mix with sinners, it is but a part of His merciful design, as it follows, *And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician;* in which He reminds them of their common infirmities, and shews them that they are of the number of the sick, but adds, He is the Physician. It follows, *I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.* As if He should say, So far am I from hating sinners, that for their sakes only I came, not that they should remain sinners, but be converted and

Chrys. ubi sup.

Gen. 3, 1.

Aug. de Con. Ev. lib. ii. c. 27.

Chrys. ubi sup.

Aug. ubi sup. become righteous. Aug. Hence He adds, *to repentance*, which serves well to explain the passage, that no one should suppose that sinners, because they are sinners, are loved by Christ, since that similitude of the sick plainly suggests what our Lord meant by calling sinners, as a Physician, the sick, in order that from iniquity as from sickness they should Ps. 11, 7. be saved. Ambrose. But how does God love righteousness, Ps. 37, 25. and David has never seen the righteous man forsaken, if the righteous are excluded, the sinner called; unless you understand that He meant by the righteous those who *boast of the law*, and seek not the grace of the Gospel. Now no one is justified by the law, but redeemed by grace. He therefore calls not those who call themselves righteous, for the claimers to righteousness are not called to grace. For if grace is from repentance, surely he who despises repentance renounces grace. Ambrose. But He calls those sinners, who considering their guilt, and feeling that they cannot be justified by the law, submit themselves by repentance to the grace of Christ. Chrys. Now He speaks of the righteous ironically, Gen. 3, 22. as when He says, *Behold Adam is become as one of us.* But that there was none righteous upon the earth St. Paul shews, Rom. 3, 23. saying, *All have sinned, and need the grace of God.* Greg. Nyss. Or, He means that the sound and righteous need no physician, i.e. the angels, but the corrupt and sinners, i.e. ourselves do; since we catch the disease of sin, which is not in heaven. Bede. Now by the election of Matthew is signified the faith of the Gentiles, who formerly gasped after worldly pleasures, but now refresh the body of Christ with zealous devotion. Theophyl. Or the publican is he who serves the prince of this world, and is debtor to the flesh, to which the glutton gives his food, the adulterer his pleasure, and another something else. But when the Lord saw him sitting at the receipt of custom, and not stirring himself to greater wickedness, He calls him that he might be snatched from the evil, and follow Jesus, and receive the Lord into the house of his soul.

Ambrose. But he who receives Christ into his inner chamber, is fed with the greatest delights of overflowing pleasures. The Lord therefore willingly enters, and reposes in his affection; but again the envy of the treacherous is

kindled, and the form of their future punishment is prefigured; for while all the faithful are feasting in the kingdom of heaven, the faithless will be cast out hungry. Or, by this is denoted the envy of the Jews, who are afflicted at the salvation of the Gentiles. AMBROSE. At the same time also is shewn the difference between those who are zealous for the law and those who are for grace, that they who follow the law shall suffer eternal hunger of soul, while they who have received the word into the inmost soul, refreshed with abundance of heavenly meat and drink, can neither hunger nor thirst. And so they who fasted in soul murmured.

33. And they said unto Him, Why do the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers, and likewise the disciples of the Pharisees; but thine eat and drink?

34. And He said unto them, Can ye make the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them?

35. But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.

36. And He spake also a parable unto them; No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old; if otherwise, then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was taken out of the new agreeth not with the old.

37. And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled and the bottles shall perish.

38. But new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved.

39. No man also having drunk old wine straightway desireth new: for he saith, The old is better.

CYRIL. As soon as they have received the first answer from Christ, they proceed from one thing to another, with

the intent to shew that the holy disciples, and Jesus Himself with them, cared very little for the law. Hence it follows, *Why do the disciples of John fast, but thine eat, &c.* as if they said, Ye eat with publicans and sinners, whereas the law forbids to have any fellowship with the unclean, but compassion comes in as an excuse for your transgression; why then do ye not fast, as they are wont to do who wish to live according to the law? But holy men indeed fast, that by the mortification of their body they may quell its passions. Christ needed not fasting for the perfecting of virtue, since as God He was free from every yoke of passion. Nor again did His companions need fasting, but being made partakers of His grace without fasting, they were strengthened in all holy and godly living. For when Christ fasted for forty days, it was not to mortify His passions, but to manifest to carnal men the rule of abstinence. AUG. Now Luke evidently relates that this was spoken not by men of themselves, but by others concerning them. How then does Matthew say, *Then came unto him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast;* unless that they themselves also came, and were all eager, as far as they were able, to put the question to Him? AUG. Now there are two fasts, one is in tribulation, to propitiate God for our sins; another in joy, when as carnal things delight us less, we feed the more on things spiritual. The Lord therefore being asked why His disciples did not fast, answered as to each fast. And first of the fast of tribulation; for it follows, *And He said unto them, Can ye make the children of the bridegroom fast when the bridegroom is with them?* CHRYS. As if He should say, The present time is one of joy and gladness, sorrow must not then be mixed up with it. CYRIL. For the shewing forth of our Saviour in this world was nothing else but a great festival, spiritually uniting our nature to Him as His bride, that she who was formerly barren might become fruitful. The children of the Bridegroom then are found to be those who have been called by Him through a new and evangelical discipline, but not the Scribes and Pharisees, who observe only the shadow of the law. AUG. Now this which Luke alone mentions, *Ye cannot make the children of the bridegroom fast,* is understood to refer to those

Lev. 15, prævaricationis.

Aug. de Con. Ev. l. ii. c. 27.

Aug. de Qu. Ev. l. ii. q. 18.

Chrys. Hom. 30. in Matt.

πανήγυρις

Aug. de Con. Ev. ii. c. 27.

very men who said that they would make the children of the Bridegroom mourn and fast, since they were about to kill the Bridegroom. CYRIL. Having granted to the children of the Bridegroom that it was not fitting that they should be troubled, as they were keeping a spiritual feast, but that fasting should be abolished among them, He adds as a direction, *But the days shall come when the Bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast in those days.* AUG. As if He said, Then shall they be desolate, and in sorrow and lamentation, until the joy of consolation shall be restored to them by the Holy Spirit. AMBROSE. Or, That fast is not given up whereby the flesh is mortified, and the desires of the body chastened. (For this fast commends us to God.) But we cannot fast who have Christ, and banquet on the flesh and blood of Christ. BASIL. The children of the Bridegroom also cannot fast, i.e. refuse nourishment to the soul, but live on every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God. AMBROSE. But when are those days, in which Christ shall be taken away from us, since He has said, *I will be with you alway, even unto the end of the world?* But no one can take Christ away from you, unless you take yourself away from Him. BEDE. For as long as the Bridegroom is with us we both rejoice, and can neither fast nor mourn. But when He has gone away through our sins, then a fast must be declared and mourning be enjoined. AMBROSE. Lastly, it is spoken of the fast of the soul, as the context shews, for it follows, *But He said, No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old.* He calleth fasting an old garment, which the Apostle thought should be taken off, saying, *Put off the old man with his deeds.* In the same manner we have a series of precepts not to mix up the actions of the old and new man. AUG. Or else, The gift of the Holy Spirit being received, there is a kind of fast, which is of joy, which they who are already renewed to a spiritual life most seasonably celebrate. Before they receive this gift, He says they are as old garments, to which a new piece of cloth is most unsuitably sewed on, i.e. any part of the doctrine which relates to the soberness of the new life; for if this takes place, the very doctrine itself also is in a measure divided, for it teaches a general fast not from pleasant food

Aug. de Qu. Ev. ii. qu. 18.

Col. 3, 9.

Aug. ubi sup.

only, but from all delight in temporal pleasures, the part of which that appertains to food He said ought not to be given to men still devoted to their old habits, for therein seems to be a rent, and it agreeth not with the old. He says also, that they are like to old skins, as it follows, *And no one putteth wine into old skins.* AMBROSE. The weakness of man's condition is exposed when our bodies are compared

Aug. ubi sup.

to the skins of dead animals. AUG. But the Apostles are compared to old skins, who are more easily burst with new wine, i.e. with spiritual precepts, than contain them. Hence it follows, *Else the new wine will burst the skins, and the wine will be spilled.* But they were new skins at that time, when after the ascension of the Lord they received the Holy Spirit, when from desire of His consolation they were renewed by prayer and hope. Hence it follows, *But the new wine must be put into new bottles, and both are preserved.* BEDE. Inasmuch as wine refreshes us within, but garments cover us without, the garments are the good works which we do abroad, by which we shine before men; wine, the fervour of faith, hope, and charity. Or, The old skins are the Scribes and Pharisees, the new piece and the new wine

Greg. Orat. de Deit. Filii et SS.

the precepts of the Gospel. GREG. NYSS. For wine newly drawn forth, evaporates on account of the natural heat in the liquor, throwing off from itself the scum by natural action. Such wine is the new covenant, which the old skins because of their unbelief contain not, and are therefore burst by the excellence of the doctrine, and cause the grace of the

Sap. 1, 4.

Spirit to flow in vain; *because into an evil soul wisdom will not enter.* BEDE. But to every soul which is not yet renewed, but goes on still in the old way of wickedness, the sacraments of new mysteries ought not to be given. They also who wish to mix the precepts of the Law with the Gospel, as the Galatians did, put new wine into old bottles. It follows, *No man also having drunk old wine straightway desireth new, for he saith, The old is better.* For the Jews, imbued with the taste of their old life, despised the precepts of the new grace, and being defiled with the traditions of their ancestors, were not able to perceive the sweetness of spiritual words.

CHAP. VI.

1. And it came to pass on the second sabbath after the first, that He went through the corn fields; and His disciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing them in their hands.

2. And certain of the Pharisees said unto them, Why do ye that which is not lawful to do on the sabbath days?

3. And Jesus answering them said, Have ye not read so much as this, what David did, when himself was an hungred, and they which were with him;

4. How he went into the house of God, and did take and eat the shewbread, and gave also to them that were with him; which it is not lawful to eat but for the Priests alone?

5. And He said unto them, That the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.

AMBROSE. Not only in the form of expression, but in His very practice and mode of action, did the Lord begin to absolve man from the observance of the old law. Hence it is said, *And it came to pass that He went through the corn fields, &c.* BEDE. For His disciples having no opportunity for eating because the multitudes thronged so, were naturally hungry, but by plucking the ears of corn they relieved their hunger, which is a mark of a strict habit of life, not seeking for prepared meats, but mere simple food. THEOPHYL. Now He says, *on the second sabbath after the first*, be-

cause the Jews called every feast a sabbath. For sabbath means *rest*. Frequently therefore was there feasting at the preparation, and they called the preparation a sabbath because of the feast, and hence they gave to the principal sabbath the name of the second-first, as being the second in consequence of the festival of the day preceding. CHRYS. For there was a double feast; one on the principal sabbath, another on the next solemn day succeeding, which was also called a sabbath. ISIDORE. He says, On the second-first, because it was the second day of the Passover, but the first of unleavened bread. Having killed the passover, on the very next day they kept the feast of unleavened bread. And it is plain that this was so from the fact, that the Apostles plucked ears of corn and ate them, for at that time the ears are weighed down by the fruit. EPIPH. On the sabbath day then they were seen passing through the corn fields, and eating the corn, shewing that the bonds of the sabbath were loosened, when the great Sabbath was come in Christ, who made us to rest from the working of our iniquities. CYRIL. But the Pharisees and Scribes not knowing the Holy Scriptures agreed together to find fault with Christ's disciples, as it follows, *And certain of the Pharisees said unto them, Why do ye, &c.* Tell me now, when a table is set before you on the sabbath day; do you not break bread? Why then do you blame others? BEDE. But some say that these things were objected to our Lord Himself; they might indeed have been objected by different persons, both to our Lord Himself and His disciples, but to whomsoever the objection is made, it chiefly refers to Him.

Chrys. Hom. 39. in Matt.

Isidore, l. i. Ep. 110.

Epiph. cont. Hær. l. i. Hær. xxx. 32.

AMBROSE. But the Lord proves the defenders of the law to be ignorant of what belongs to the law, bringing the example of David; as it follows, *And Jesus answering said to them, Have ye not read so much as this, &c.* CYRIL. As if He said, Whereas the law of Moses expressly says, *Give a righteous judgment, and ye shall not respect persons in judgment*, how now do ye blame My disciples, who even to this day extol David as a saint and prophet, though he kept not the commandment of Moses? CHRYS. And mark, that whenever the Lord speaks for His servants, (i. e. His disciples,) He brings forward servants, as for example David and the Priests; but

Deut. 1, 16. 17.

Chrys. ut sup.

when for Himself, He introduces His Father; as in that place, *My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.* John 5, 17.

THEOPHYL. But He reproves them in another way, as it is added, *And He said unto them, that the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.* As if He said, I am the Lord of the sabbath, as being He who ordained it, and as the Legislator I have power to loose the sabbath; for Christ was called the Son of man, who being the Son of God yet condescended in a miraculous manner to be made and called for man's sake the Son of man. CHRYS. But Mark declares that He uttered this of our common nature, for He said, *The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath.* It is therefore more fitting that the sabbath should be subject to man, than that man should bow his neck to the sabbath. Chrys. ubi sup.

AMBROSE. But herein is a great mystery. For the field is the whole world, the corn is the abundant harvest of the saints in the seed of the human race, the ears of corn are the fruits of the Church, which the Apostles shaking off by their works fed upon, nourishing themselves with our increase, and by their mighty miracles, as it were out of the bodily husks, plucking forth the fruits of the mind to the light of faith.

BEDE. For they bruise the ears in their hands, because, when they wish to bring others over into the body of Christ, they mortify their old man with its acts drawing them away from worldly thoughts. AMBROSE. Now the Jews thought this unlawful on the sabbath, but Christ by the gift of new grace represented hereby the rest of the law, the work of grace. Wonderfully has He called it the second-first sabbath, not the first-second, because that was loosed from the law which was first, and this is made first which was ordained second. It is therefore called the second sabbath according to number, the first according to the grace of the work. For that sabbath is better where there is no penalty, than that where there is a penalty prescribed. Or this perhaps was first in the foreknowledge of wisdom, and second in the sanction of the ordinance. Now in David escaping with his companions, there was a foreshadowing of Christ in the law, who with His Apostles escaped the prince of the world. But how was it that the Observer and Defender of the law Himself both ate the bread, and gave it to those that were with Him, which no one was

allowed to eat but the priests, except that He might shew by that figure that the priests' bread was to come over to the use of the people, or that we ought to imitate the priests' life, or that all the children of the Church are priests, for we are
1 Pet. 2. 5. anointed into a holy priesthood, offering ourselves a spiritual sacrifice to God. But if the sabbath was made for men, and the benefit of men required that a man when hungry (having been long without the fruits of the earth) should forsake the abstinence of the old fast, the law is surely not broken but fulfilled.

6. And it came to pass also on another sabbath, that He entered into the synagogue and taught: and there was a man whose right hand was withered.

7. And the Scribes and Pharisees watched Him, whether He would heal on the sabbath day; that they might find an accusation against Him.

8. But He knew their thoughts, and said to the man which had the withered hand, Rise up, and stand forth in the midst. And he arose and stood forth.

9. Then said Jesus unto them, I will ask you one thing; Is it lawful on the sabbath days to do good, or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy it?

10. And looking round about upon them all, He said unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he did so: and his hand was restored whole as the other.

11. And they were filled with madness; and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus.

Ambrose. The Lord now proceeds to another work. For He who had determined to make the whole man safe, was able to cure each member. Hence it is said, *And it came to pass also on another sabbath, that He entered into the synagogue and taught.* Bede. He chiefly heals and teaches on the sabbaths, not only to convey the meaning of a spiritual sabbath, but because of the more numerous assembly of the people. Cyril. But He taught things far beyond their

comprehension, and opened to His hearers the way to future salvation by Him; and then after having first taught them, He suddenly shewed His divine power, as it follows, *and there was a man there whose right hand was withered.*

BEDE. But since the Master had excused by an undeniable example the breach of the sabbath, with which they charged His disciples, their object is now by watching to bring a false accusation against the Master Himself. As it follows, *And the Scribes and Pharisees watched Him, if He would heal on the sabbath,* that if He did not, they might accuse Him of cruelty or impotence; if He did, of violation of the sabbath. Hence it follows, *that they might find an accusation against Him.* CYRIL. For this is the way of the envious man, he feeds in himself his pang of grief with the praises of others. But the Lord knew all things, and searches the hearts; as it follows, *But He knew their thoughts, and said to the man who had the withered hand, Rise up, and stand. And he arose and stood forth,* that perchance he might stir up the cruel Pharisees to pity, and allay the flames of their passion.

BEDE. But the Lord anticipating the false charge which they were preparing against Him, reproves those who by wrongly interpreting the law thought that they must rest on the sabbath-day even from good works; whereas the law commands us to abstain from servile works, i. e. from evil, on the sabbath. Hence it follows, *Then said Jesus unto them, I ask you, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath, &c.* CYRIL. This is a very useful question, for if it is lawful to do good on the sabbath, and there is no reason why those who work should not obtain mercy from God, cease to gather up accusation against Christ. But if it be not lawful to do good on the sabbath, and the law prohibits the safety of life, thou art become the accuser of the law. For if we examine the very institution of the sabbath, we shall find it was introduced for an object of mercy, for God commanded to keep holy the sabbath, that may rest *thy man servant and thy maid servant, and all thy cattle.* But he who has mercy on his ox, and the rest of his cattle, how much rather will he not have mercy on man troubled with a severe disease? AMBROSE. But the law by things present prefigured the form

Exod. 20. 23.

of things future, among which surely the days of rest to come are to be not from good works but from evil. For although secular works may be given up, yet it is no idle act of a good work to rest in the praise of God. Aug. But though our Lord was healing the body, He asked this question, "is it lawful to save the soul or to lose it?" either because He performed His miracles on account of faith, in which is the salvation of the soul; or, because the cure of the right hand signified the salvation of the soul, which ceasing to do good works, seemed in some measure to have a withered right hand, i. e. He placed the soul for the man, as men are wont to say, "So many souls were there."

Aug. de Qu. Ev. l. iii. qu. 7.

Aug. But it may be questioned how Matthew came to say that they asked the Lord, *whether it was lawful to heal on the sabbath*, when Luke in this place states that they rather were asked of the Lord. We must therefore believe that they first asked the Lord, and that then He understanding by their thoughts that they sought an opportunity to accuse Him, placed the man in the midst whom He was going to heal, and asked the question which Mark and Luke relate Him to have asked. It follows, *And looking round about upon them all.* Titus Bos. When the eyes of all were, as it were, riveted together, and their minds also fixed upon the consideration of the matter, *He said to the man, Stretch forth thy hand;* I command thee, who created man. But he who had the withered hand hears, and is made whole, as it follows, *And he stretched it, and it was restored.* But they who should have been astonished at the miracle, increased in malice; as it follows, *But they were filled with madness; and communed one with another what they should do to Jesus.* Chrys. And as Matthew relates, *they go out to take counsel, that they should kill Him.* Cyril. Thou perceivest, O Pharisee, a divine Worker, and Him who delivers the sick by His heavenly power, and out of envy thou breathest forth death. Bede. The man represents the human race, withered by the unfruitfulness of good works, because of the hand in our first parent stretched forth to take the apple, which was healed by the innocent hand stretched forth on the cross. And rightly was the withered hand in the synagogue, because where there is the

Aug. de Con. Ev. l. ii. c. 35.

Chrys. Hom. in Matt. 40.

greater gift of knowledge, there the transgressor lies under the greater blame. AMBROSE. You have heard then the words of Him who says, *Stretch forth thy hand.* That is a frequent and common cure, and thou that thinkest thy hand is whole, beware lest it be contracted by avarice or sacrilege. Stretch it forth oftener to help thy neighbour, to protect the widow, to save from injury him whom you see the victim of unjust attack; stretch it forth to the poor man who beseeches thee; stretch it forth to the Lord, to ask pardon of thy sins; as the hand is stretched forth so is it healed. 1 Kings 13, 5. 6.

12. And it came to pass in those days, that He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.

13. And when it was day, He called unto Him His disciples: and of them He chose twelve, whom also He named apostles;

14. Simon, (whom He also named Peter,) and Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew,

15. Matthew and Thomas, James the son of Alphæus, and Simon called Zelotes,

16. And Judas the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor.

Gloss. non occ.

GLOSS. When adversaries rose up against the miracles and teaching of Christ, He chose Apostles as defenders and witnesses of the truth, and prefaces their election with prayer; as it is said, *And it came to pass, &c.* AMBROSE. Let not thy ears be open to deceit, that thou shouldest think that the Son of God prays from want of strength, that He may obtain what He could not perform; for being Himself the Author of power, the Master of obedience, He leads us by His own example to the precepts of virtue.

CYRIL. Let us examine then in the actions which Jesus did, how He teaches us to be instant in prayer to God, going apart by ourselves, and in secret, no one seeing us; putting aside also our worldly cares, that the mind may be

raised up to the height of divine contemplation; and this we have marked in the fact, that Jesus went into a mountain apart to pray. AMBROSE. Every where also He prays alone, for human wishes comprehend not the wisdom of God; and no one can be a partaker of the secrets of Christ. But not every one who prays ascends a mountain, he only who prays advancing from earthly things to higher, who is not anxious for the riches or honours of the world. All whose minds are raised above the world ascend the mountain. In the Gospel therefore you will find, that the disciples alone ascend the mountain with the Lord. But thou, O Christian, hast now the character given, the form prescribed which thou shouldest imitate; as it follows, *And He continued all night in prayer to God.* For what oughtest thou to do for thy salvation, when Christ continues all night in prayer for thee? CHRYS. Rise, then, thou also at night-time. The soul is then purer, the very darkness and great silence are in themselves enough to lead us to sorrow for our sins. But if thou lookest upon the heaven itself studded with stars as with unnumbered eyes, if thou thinkest that they who wanton and do unjustly in day-time are then nothing different from the dead, thou wilt loathe all human undertakings. All these things serve to raise the mind. Vain-glory then disquiets not, no tumult of passion has the mastery; fire does not so destroy the rust of iron as nightly prayer the blight of sin. He whom the heat of the sun has fevered by day is refreshed by the dew; nightly tears are better than any dew, and are proof against desire and fear. But if a man is not cherished by the dew we speak of, he withers in the day. Wherefore although thou prayest not much at night, pray once with watching, and it is enough; shew that the night belongs not only to the body, but to the soul.

Chrys. Hom. ad Pop. Ant. 42. et in Act. c. 16. Ed. Lat.

AMBROSE. But what does it become thee to do when thou wouldest commence any work of piety, when Christ, about to send out His disciples, first prayed? for it follows, *And when it was day, He called His disciples, &c.*, whom truly He destined to be the means of spreading the salvation of man through the world. Turn thy eyes also to the heavenly council. Not the wise men, not the rich, not the noble, but

He chose to send out fishermen and publicans, that they might not seem to turn men to their grace by riches or by the influence of power and rank, and that the force of truth, not the graces of oratory, might prevail. CYRIL. But mark the great carefulness of the Evangelist. He not only says that the holy Apostles were chosen, but he enumerates them by name, that no one should dare to insert any others in the catalogue; *Simon, whom He also called Peter, and Andrew his brother.* BEDE. He not only surnamed Peter first, but long before this, when he was brought by Andrew, it is said, *Thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, a stone.* But Luke, wishing to mention the names of the disciples, since it was necessary to call him Peter, wished shortly to imply that this was not his name before, but the Lord had given it to him. EUSEB. The two next are James and John, as it follows, *James and John,* both indeed sons of Zebedee, who were also fishermen. After them he mentions *Philip and Bartholomew.* John says Philip was of Bethsaida, of the city of Andrew and Peter. Bartholomew was a simple man, devoid of all worldly knowledge and guile. But Matthew was called from those who used to collect taxes; concerning whom he adds *Matthew and Thomas.* BEDE. Matthew places himself after his fellow-disciple Thomas, from humility, whereas by the other Evangelists he is put before him. It follows, *James the son of Alphæus, and Simon who is called Zelotes.* GLOSS. Because in truth he was of Cana in Galilee, which is interpreted zeal; and this is added to distinguish him from Simon Peter. It follows, *Judas the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him.*

Cyril. ut sup.

John 1, 42.

AUG. With respect to the name of Judas the brother of James, Luke seems to differ from Matthew, who calls him Thaddæus. But what prevented a man from being called by two or three names? Judas the traitor is chosen, not unwittingly but knowingly, for Christ had indeed taken to Himself the weakness of man, and therefore refused not even this share of human infirmity. He was willing to be betrayed by His own Apostle, that thou when betrayed by thy friend mayest bear calmly thy mistaken judgment, thy kindness thrown away.

Aug. de Con. Ev. lib. ii. c. 30.

BEDE. But in a mystical sense the mountain on which our

Lord chose His disciples represents the loftiness of justice in which they were to be instructed, and which they were to preach to others; so also the law was given on a mountain. CYRIL. But if we may learn the interpretation of the Apostles' names, know that Peter means, "loosening or knowing;" Andrew, "glorious power," or "answering;" but James, "apostle of grief;" John, "the grace of the Lord;" Matthew, "given;" Philip, "large mouth," or the "orifice of a torch;" Bartholomew, "the son of him who lets down water;" Thomas, "deep or twin;" James the son of Alphæus, "supplanter of the step of life;" Judas, "confession;" Simon, "obedience."

17. And He came down with them, and stood in the plain, and the company of His disciples, and a great multitude of people out of all Judæa, and Jerusalem, and from the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon, which came to hear Him, and to be healed of their diseases;

18. And they that were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed.

19. And the whole multitude sought to touch Him; for there went virtue out of Him, and healed them all.

CYRIL. When the ordination of the Apostles was accomplished, and great numbers were collected together from the country of Judæa, and from the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon, (who were idolaters,) He gave the Apostles their commission to be the teachers of the whole world, that they might recal the Jews from the bondage of the law, but the worshippers of devils from their Gentile errors to the knowledge of the truth. Hence it is said, *And He came down with them, and stood in the plain, and a great multitude from Judæa, and the sea coast, &c.* BEDE. By the sea coast he does not refer to the neighbouring sea of Galilee, because this would not be accounted wonderful, but it is so called from the great sea, and therein also Tyre and Sidon may be comprehended, of which it follows, *Both of Tyre and Sidon.* And these states being Gentile, are purposely named here, to indicate how great was the fame and power of the Saviour which had brought even

the citizens of the coast to receive His healing and teaching. Hence it follows, *Which came to hear Him.* THEOPHYL. That is, for the cure of their souls; and that they might be healed of their diseases, that is, for the cure of their bodies. CYRIL. But after that the High Priest had made publicly known His choice of Apostles, He did many and great miracles, that the Jews and Gentiles who had assembled might know that these were invested by Christ with the dignity of the Apostleship, and that He Himself was not as another man, but rather was God, as being the Incarnate Word. Hence it follows, *And the whole multitude sought to touch Him, for there went virtue out of Him.* For Christ did not receive virtue from others, but since He was by nature God, sending out His own virtue upon the sick, He healed them all.

AMBROSE. But observe all things carefully, how He both ascends with His Apostles and descends to the multitude; for how could the multitude see Christ but in a lowly place. It follows Him not to the lofty places, it ascends not to the heights. Lastly, when He descends, He finds the sick, for in the high places there can be no sick. BEDE. You will scarcely find any where that the multitudes follow our Lord to the higher places, or that a sick person is healed on a mountain; but having quenched the fever of lust and lit the torch of knowledge, each man approaches by degrees to the height of the virtues. But the multitudes which were able to touch the Lord are healed by the virtue of that touch, as formerly the leper is cleansed when our Lord touched him. The touch of the Saviour then is the work of salvation, whom to touch is to believe on Him, to be touched is to be healed by His precious gifts.

20. And He lifted up His eyes on His disciples, and said, Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God.

21. Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh.

22. Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and

when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake.

23. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.

Cyril. After the ordination of the Apostles, the Saviour directed His disciples to the newness of the evangelical life. Ambrose. But being about to utter His divine oracles, He begins to rise higher; although He stood in a low place, yet as it is said, *He lifted up His eyes.* What is lifting up the eyes, but to disclose a more hidden light? Bede. And although He speaks in a general way to all, yet more especially He lifts up His eyes on His disciples; for it follows, *on His disciples,* that to those who receive the word listening attentively with the heart, He might reveal more fully the light of its deep meaning. Ambrose. Now Luke mentions only four blessings, but Matthew eight; but in those eight are contained these four, and in these four those eight. For the one has embraced as it were the four cardinal virtues, the other has revealed in those eight the mystical number. For as the eighth[1] is the accomplishment of our hope, so is the eighth also the completion of the virtues. But each Evangelist has placed the blessings of poverty first, for it is the first in order, and the purest, as it were, of the virtues; for he who has despised the world shall reap an eternal reward. Now can any one obtain the reward of the heavenly kingdom who, overcome by the desires of the world, has no power of escape from them? Hence it follows, *He said, Blessed are the poor.*

[1] For the 'eighth number,' see above, p. 78.

Cyril. In the Gospel according to St. Matthew it is said, *Blessed are the poor in spirit,* that we should understand the poor in spirit to be one of a modest and somewhat depressed mind. Hence our Saviour says, *Learn from Me, for I am meek and lowly of heart.* But Luke says, *Blessed are the poor,* without the addition of spirit, calling those poor who despise riches. For it became those who were to preach the doctrines of the saving Gospel to have no covetousness, but their affections set upon higher things.

BASIL. But not every one oppressed with poverty is blessed, but he who has preferred the commandment of Christ to worldly riches. For many are poor in their possessions, yet most covetous in their disposition; these poverty does not save, but their affections condemn. For nothing involuntary deserves a blessing, because all virtue is characterized by the freedom of the will. Blessed then is the poor man as being the disciple of Christ, who endured poverty for us. For the Lord Himself has fulfilled every work which leads to happiness, leaving Himself an example for us to follow. EUSEB. But when the celestial kingdom is considered in the many gradations of its blessings, the first step in the scale belongs to those who by divine instinct embrace poverty. Such did He make those who first became His disciples; therefore He says in their person, *For yours is the kingdom of heaven*, as pointedly addressing Himself to those present, upon whom also He lifted up His eyes. Basil. in Ps. 33.

CYRIL. After having commanded them to embrace poverty, He then crowns with honour those things which follow from poverty. It is the lot of those who embrace poverty to be in want of the necessaries of life, and scarcely to be able to get food. He does not then permit His disciples to be faint-hearted on this account, but says, *Blessed are ye who hunger now*. BEDE. That is, blessed are ye who chasten your body and subject it to bondage, who in hunger and thirst give heed to the word, for then shall ye receive the fulness of heavenly joys. GREG. NYSS. But in a deeper sense, as they who partake of bodily food vary their appetites according to the nature of the things to be eaten; so also in the food of the soul, by some indeed that is desired which depends upon the opinion of men, by others, that which is essentially and of its own nature good. Hence, according to Matthew, men are blessed who account righteousness in the place of food and drink; by righteousness I mean not a particular but an universal virtue, which he who hungers after is said to be blessed. BEDE. Plainly instructing us, that we ought never to account ourselves sufficiently righteous, but always desire a daily increase in righteousness, to the perfect fulness of which the Psalmist shews us that we cannot arrive in this world, but in the world to come. *I shall be satisfied* Greg. de Beat. orat. 4. Ps. 17, 15.

when Thy glory shall be made manifest. Hence it follows, *For ye shall be filled.*

Greg. ubi sup. GREG. NYSS. For to those who hunger and thirst after righteousness He promises abundance of the things they desire. For none of the pleasures which are sought in this life can satisfy those who pursue them. But the pursuit of virtue alone is followed by that reward, which implants a joy in the soul that never faileth. CYRIL. But poverty is followed not only by a want of those things which bring delight, but also by a dejected look, *because of sorrow.* Hence it follows, *Blessed are ye that weep.* He blesses those who weep, not those who merely drop tears from their eyes, (for this is common to the believing and unbelieving, when sorrow befals them,) but rather He calls those blessed, who shun a careless life, mixed up with sin, and devoted to carnal pleasures, and refuse enjoyments almost weeping from their hatred of all worldly things.

Chrys. Hom. 18. ad pop. Ant. CHRYS. But godly sorrow is a great thing, and it worketh repentance to salvation. Hence St. Paul when he had no failings of his own to weep for, mourned for those of others. Such grief is the source of gladness, as it follows, *For ye shall laugh.* For if we do no good to those for whom we weep, we do good to ourselves. For he who thus weeps for the sins of others, will not let his own go unwept for; but the rather he will not easily fall into sin. Let us not be ever relaxing ourselves in this short life, lest we sigh in that which is eternal. Let us not seek delights from which flow lamentation, and much sorrow, but let us be saddened with sorrow which brings forth pardon. We often find the Lord sorrowing, never laughing. Basil. Hom. de Grat. act. BASIL. But He promises laughing to those who weep; not indeed the noise of laughter from the mouth, but a gladness pure and unmixed with aught of sorrow. BEDE. He then who on account of the riches of the inheritance of Christ, for the bread of eternal life, for the hope of heavenly joys, desires to suffer weeping, hunger, and poverty, is blessed. But much more blessed is he who does not shrink to maintain these virtues in adversity. Hence it follows, *Blessed are ye when men shall hate you.* For although men hate, with their wicked hearts they cannot injure the heart that is beloved by Christ. It follows, *And when they shall separate you.* Let them

separate and expel you from the synagogue. Christ finds you out, and strengthens you. It follows; *And shall reproach you.* Let them reproach the name of the Crucified, He Himself raises together with Him those that have died with Him, and makes them sit in heavenly places. It follows, *And cast out your name as evil.* Here He means the name of Christian, which by Jews and Gentiles as far as they were able was frequently erased from the memory, and cast out by men, when there was no cause for hatred, but the Son of man; for in truth they who believed on the name of Christ, wished to be called after His name. Therefore He teaches that they are to be persecuted by men, but are to be blessed beyond men. As it follows, *Rejoice ye in that day, and weep for joy, for behold your reward is great in heaven.* CHRYS. Great and little are measured by the dignity of the speaker. Let us enquire then who promised the great reward. If indeed a prophet or an Apostle, little had been in his estimation great; but now it is the Lord in whose hands are eternal treasures and riches surpassing man's conception, who has promised great reward. BASIL. Again, *great* has sometimes a positive signification, as the heaven is great, and the earth is great; but sometimes it has relation to something else, as a great ox or great horse, on comparing two things of like nature. I think then that great reward will be laid up for those who suffer reproach for Christ's sake, not as in comparison with those things in our power, but as being in itself great because given by God. DAMASC. Those things which may be measured or numbered are used definitely, but that which from a certain excellence surpasses all measure and number we call great and much indefinitely; as when we say that great is the longsuffering of God.

Basil. Hom. 6. in Hex.

Damas. in lib. de Logic. c. 49.

EUSEB. He then fortifies His disciples against the attacks of their adversaries, which they were about to suffer as they preached through the whole world; adding, *For in like manner did their fathers to the prophets.* AMBROSE. For the Jews persecuted the prophets even to death. BEDE. They who speak the truth commonly suffer persecution, yet the ancient prophets did not therefore from fear of persecution turn away from preaching the truth.

Ambrose. In that He says, *Blessed are the poor,* thou hast temperance; which abstains from sin, tramples upon the world, seeks not vain delights. In *Blessed are they that hunger,* thou hast righteousness; for he who hungers suffers together with the hungry, and by suffering together with him gives to him, by giving becomes righteous, and his
Ps. 112, 9. righteousness abideth for ever. In *Blessed are they that weep now,* thou hast prudence; which is to weep for the things of time, and to seek those which are eternal. In *Blessed are ye when men hate you,* thou hast fortitude; not that which deserves hatred for crime, but which suffers persecution for faith. For so thou wilt attain to the crown of suffering, if thou slightest the favour of men, and seekest that which is from God.

Temperance therefore brings with it a pure heart; righteousness, mercy; prudence, peace; fortitude, meekness. The virtues are so joined and linked to one another, that he who has one seems to have many; and the Saints have each one especial virtue, but the more abundant virtue has the richer reward. What hospitality in Abraham, what humility, but because he excelled in faith, he gained the pre-eminence above all others. To every one there are many rewards because many incentives to virtue, but that which is most abundant in a good action, has the most exceeding reward.

24. But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation.

25. Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep.

26. Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.

Cyril. Having said before that poverty for God's sake is the cause of every good thing, and that hunger and weeping will not be without the reward of the saints, He goes on to denounce the opposite to these as the source of condemnation and punishment. *But woe unto you rich, for ye have your consolation.* Chrys. For this expression, *woe,* is always said in the Scriptures to those who cannot escape from

future punishment. AMBROSE. But although in the abundance of wealth many are the allurements to crime, yet many also are the incitements to virtue. Although virtue requires no support, and the offering of the poor man is more commendable than the liberality of the rich, still it is not those who possess riches, but those who know not how to use them, that are condemned by the authority of the heavenly sentence. For as that poor man is more praiseworthy who gives without grudging, so is the rich man more guilty, who ought to return thanks for what he has received, and not to hide without using it the sum which was given him for the common good. It is not therefore the money, but the heart of the possessor which is in fault. And though there be no heavier punishment than to be preserving with anxious fear what is to serve for the advantage of successors, yet since the covetous desires are fed by a certain pleasure of amassing, they who have had their consolation in the present life, have lost an eternal reward. We may here however understand by the rich man the Jewish people, or the heretics, or at least the Pharisees, who, rejoicing in an abundance of words, and a kind of hereditary pride of eloquence, have overstepped the simplicity of true faith, and gained to themselves useless treasures.

BEDE. *Woe to you that are full, for ye shall be hungry.* That rich man clothed in purple was full, feasting sumptuously every day, but endured in hunger that dreadful "woe," when from the finger of Lazarus, whom he had despised, he begged a drop of water. BASIL. Now it is plain that the rule of abstinence is necessary, because the Apostle mentions it among the fruits of the Spirit. For the subjection of the body is by nothing so obtained as by abstinence, whereby, as it were a bridle, it becomes us to keep in check the fervour of youth. Abstinence then is the putting to death of sin, the extirpation of passions, the beginning of the spiritual life, blunting in itself the sting of temptations. But lest there should be any agreement with the enemies of God, we must accept every thing as the occasion requires, to shew, that to *the pure all things are pure*, by coming indeed to the necessaries of life, but abstaining altogether from those which conduce to pleasure. But since it is not possible that all should

Basil. Reg. fus tract. 16—19.

Gal. 5, 23.

Tit. 1, 15.

keep the same hours, or the same manner, or the same proportion, still let there be one purpose, never to wait to be filled, for fulness of stomach makes the body itself also unfit for its proper functions, sleepy, and inclined to what is hurtful. BEDE. In another way. If those are happy who always hunger after the works of righteousness, they on the other hand are counted to be unhappy, who, pleasing themselves in their own desires, suffer no hunger after the true good. It follows, *Woe to you who laugh, &c.* BASIL. Whereas the Lord reproves those who laugh now, it is plain that there will never be a house of laughter to the faithful, especially since there is so great a multitude of those who die in sin for whom we must mourn. Excessive laughter is a sign of want of moderation, and the motion of an unrestrained spirit; but ever to express the feelings of our heart with a pleasantness of countenance is not unseemly. CHRYS. But tell me, why art thou distracting and wasting thyself away with pleasures, who must stand before the awful judgment, and give account of all things done here? BEDE. But because flattery being the very nurse of sin, like oil to the flames, is wont to minister fuel to those who are on fire with sin, He adds, *Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you.* CHRYS. What is said here is not opposed to what our Lord says elsewhere, *Let your light shine before men;* that is, that we should be eager to do good for the glory of God, not our own. For vain-glory is a baneful thing, and from hence springs iniquity, and despair, and avarice, the mother of evil. But if thou seekest to turn away from this, ever raise thy eyes to God, and be content with that glory which is from Him. For if in all things we must choose the more learned for judges, how dost thou trust to the many the decision of virtue, and not rather to Him, who before all others knoweth it, and can give and reward it, whose glory therefore if thou desirest, avoid the praise of men. For no one more excites our admiration than he who rejects glory. And if we do this, much more does the God of all. Be mindful then, that the glory of men quickly faileth, seeing in the course of time it is past into oblivion. It follows, *For so did their fathers to the false prophets.* BEDE. By the false prophets are meant those, who to gain the favour of the multitude attempt to

Basil. ut sup.

Chrys. Hom. 6. in Matt.

Matt. 5, 16.

predict future events. The Lord on the mountain pronounces only the blessings of the good, but on the plain he describes also the "woe" of the wicked, because the yet uninstructed hearers must first be brought by terrors to good works, but the perfect need but be invited by rewards. AMBROSE. And mark, that Matthew by rewards called the people to virtue and faith, but Luke also frightened them from their sins and iniquities by the denunciation of future punishment.

27. But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you,

28. Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.

29. And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloke forbid not to take thy coat also.

30. Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again.

31. And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.

BEDE. Having spoken above of what they might suffer from their enemies, He now points out how they ought to conduct themselves towards their enemies, saying, *But I say to you who hear.* AMBROSE. Having proceeded in the enumeration of many heavenly actions, He not unwisely comes to this place last, that He might teach the people confirmed by the divine miracles to march onward in the footsteps of virtue beyond the path of the law. Lastly, among the three greatest, (hope, faith, and charity,) the greatest is charity, which is commanded in these words, *Love your enemies.* BASIL. It is indeed the part of an enemy to injure and be treacherous. Every one then who does harm in any way to any one is called his enemy. CYRIL. But this way of life was well adapted to the holy teachers who were about to preach throughout the earth the word of salvation, and if it had been their will to take vengeance upon their persecutors, had failed to call them to the knowledge of sal-

Basil. in reg. brev. 176.

Chrys. Hom. 18. in Matt vation. CHRYS. But He says not, Do not hate, but *love;* nor did He merely command to love, but also to do good, as it follows, *Do good to them which hate you.* Basil. ubi sup. BASIL. But because man consists of body and soul, to the soul indeed we shall do this good by reproving and admonishing such men, and leading them by the hand to conversion; but to the body, by profiting them in the necessaries of life.

It follows, *Bless them that curse you.* CHRYS. For they who pierce their own souls deserve tears and weeping, not curses. For nothing is more hateful than a cursing heart, or more foul than a tongue which utters curses. O man, spit not forth the poison of asps, nor be turned into a beast. Thy mouth was given thee not to bite with, but to heal the wounds of others. But He commands us to count our enemies in the rank of our friends, not only in a general way, but as our particular friends for whom we are accustomed to pray; as it follows, *Pray for them which persecute you.* But many on the contrary falling down, and striking their faces upon the ground, and stretching forth their hands, pray God not for their sins, but against their enemies, which is nothing else but piercing their own selves. When thou prayest to Him that He would hear thee cursing thy enemies, who has forbidden thee to pray against thy enemies, how is it possible for thee to be heard, since thou art calling Him to hear thee by striking an enemy in the king's presence, not with the hand indeed, but with thy words. What art thou doing, O man? thou standest to obtain pardon of your sins, and thou fillest thy mouth with bitterness. It is a time of forgiveness, prayer, and mourning, not of rage. BEDE. But the question is fairly raised, how it is that in the prophets are to be found many curses against their enemies. Upon which we must observe, that the prophets in the imprecations they uttered foretold the future, and that not with the feelings of one who wishes, but in the spirit of one who foresees. CYRIL. Now the old law commanded us not to injure one another; or if we are first injured, not to extend our wrath beyond the measure of the injurer, but the fulfilling of the law is in Christ and in His commands. Hence it follows, *And unto Him that smiteth thee on the one cheek, offer also the other.*

CHRYS. For physicians also, when they are attacked by madmen, have then most compassion on them, and exert themselves to restore them. Have thou also a like consideration towards thy persecutors; for it is they who are under the greatest infirmity. And let us not cease until they have exhausted all their bitterness, they will then overpower thee with thanks, and God Himself will give thee a crown, because thou hast delivered thy brother from the worst disease. BASIL. But we almost all of us offend against this command, and especially the powerful and rulers, not only if they have suffered insult, but if respect is not paid them, accounting all those their enemies who treat them with less consideration than they think they deserve. But it is a great dishonour in a prince to be ready to take revenge. For how shall he teach another, *to return to no man evil for evil*, if he is eager to retaliate on him who injures him?

Chrys. Hom. 18. in Matt

Basil. in Esai. 1, 23. in App.

Rom. 12, 17.

CYRIL. But the Lord would moreover have us to be despisers of property. As it follows, *And him that taketh away thy cloak, forbid not to take thy coat also.* For this is the soul's virtue, which is altogether alien from feeling the pleasure of wealth. For it becomes him who is merciful even to forget his misfortunes, that we may confer the same benefits upon our persecutors, whereby we assist our dear friends. CHRYS. Now He said not, Bear humbly the rule of thy persecutor, but, Go on wisely, and prepare thyself to suffer what he desires thee to do; overcoming his insolence by thy great prudence, that he may depart with shame at thy excellent endurance.

Chrys. ubi sup.

But some one will say, *How can this be?* When thou hast seen God made man, and suffering so many things for thee, dost thou still ask and doubt how it is possible to pardon the iniquities of thy fellow servants? Who has suffered what thy God has, when He was bound, scourged, enduring to be spat upon, suffering death? Here it follows, *But to every one who seeks, give.* AUG. He says not, To him that seeketh give all things, but give what you justly and honestly can, that is, what as far as man can know or believe, neither hurts you, nor another: and if thou hast justly refused any one, the justice must be declared to

Aug. de Serm. Dom. lib. 1. c. 20.

him, (so as not to send him away empty,) sometimes thou wilt confer even a greater boon when thou hast corrected him who seeks what he ought not. CHRYS. Herein however we do not lightly err, when not only we give not to those who seek, but also blame them? Why (you say) does he not work, why is the idle man fed? Tell me, dost thou then possess by labour? but still if thou workest, dost thou work for this, that thou shouldest blame another? For a single loaf and coat dost thou call a man covetous? Thou givest nothing, make then no reproaches. Why dost thou neither take pity thyself, and dissuadest those who would? If we spend upon all indifferently, we shall always have compassion: for because Abraham entertains all, he also entertains angels. For if a man is a homicide and a robber, does he not, thinkest thou, deserve to have bread? Let us not then be severe censors of others, lest we too be strictly judged.

Chrys. Hom. 10. in 1 Cor.

It follows, *And of him that taketh away thy goods, ask them not again.* CHRYS. Every thing we have we receive from God. But when we speak of "mine and thine," they are only bare words. For if you assert a house to be yours, you have uttered an expression which wants the substance of reality. For both the air, the soil, and the moisture, are the Creator's. Thou again art he who has built the house; but although the use is thine, it is doubtful, not only because of death, but also on account of the issues of things. Thy soul is not thy own possession, and will be reckoned to thee in like manner as all thy goods. God wishes those things to be thine which are intrusted to thee for thy brethren, and they will be thine if thou hast dispensed them for others. But if thou hast spent richly upon thyself what things are thine, they are now become another's. But through a wicked desire of wealth men strive together in a state contrary to Christ's words, *And of him that taketh away thy goods, ask them not again.*

Aug. de Ser. Dom. lib. 1. c. 19.

AUG. He says this of garments, houses, farms, beasts of burdens, and generally of all property. But a Christian ought not to possess a slave as he does a horse or money. If a slave is more honourably governed by thee than by him who desires to take him from thee, I know not whether any one would dare to say, that he ought to be despised as a garment.

ut vestimentum.

CHRYS. Now we have a natural law implanted in us, by which we distinguish between what is virtue, and what is vice. Hence it follows, *And as ye would that men should do unto you, do ye also to them.* He does not say, Whatever ye would not that men should do unto you, do not ye. For since there are two ways which lead to virtue, namely, abstaining from evil, and doing good, he names one, signifying by it the other also. And if indeed He had said, That ye may be men, love the beasts, the command would be a difficult one. But if they are commanded to love men, which is a natural admonition, wherein lies the difficulty, since even the wolves and lions observe it, whom a natural relation compels to love one another. It is manifest then that Christ has ordained nothing surpassing our nature, but what He had long before implanted in our conscience, so that thy own will is the law to thee. And if thou wilt have good done unto thee, thou must do good to others; if thou wilt that another should shew mercy to thee, thou must shew mercy to thy neighbour. Chrys Hom. 13. ad Pop. Ant.

32. For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them.

33. And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same.

34. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again.

35. But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for He is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.

36. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.

CHRYS. The Lord had said that we must love our enemies, but that you might not think this an exaggerated expression, Chrys. Hom. i. in Col.

regarding it solely as spoken to alarm them, He adds the reason, saying, *For if you love them which love you, what thank have ye?* There are indeed several causes which produce love; but spiritual love exceeds them all. For nothing earthly engenders it, neither gain, nor kindness, nor nature, nor time, but it descends from heaven. But why wonder that it needs not kindness to excite it, when it is not even overcome of malice? A father indeed suffering wrong bursts the bands of love. A wife after a quarrel leaves her husband. A son, if he sees his father come to a great age, is troubled. But Paul went to those who stoned him to do them good. Moses is stoned by the Jews, and prays for them. Let us then reverence spiritual love, for it is indissoluble. Reproving therefore those who were inclined to wax cold, He adds, *For sinners even love those which love them.* As if He said, Because I wish you to possess more than these, I do not advise you only to love your friends, but also your enemies. It is common to all to do good to those who do good to them. But He shews that He seeks something more than is the custom of sinners, who do good to their friends. Hence it follows, *And if you do good to those who do good to you, what thank have ye?*

Acts 14, 17. Exod. 17, 40.

BEDE. But He not only condemns as unprofitable the love and kindness of sinners, but also the lending. As it follows, *And if ye lend to those from whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again.* AMBROSE. Now philosophy seems to divide justice into three parts; one towards God, which is called *piety;* another towards our parents, or the rest of mankind; a third to the dead, that the proper rites may be performed. But the Lord Jesus passing beyond the oracle of the law, and the heights of prophecy, extended the duties of piety to those also who have injured us, adding, *But love your enemies.* CHRYS. Whereby thou wilt confer more upon thyself than him. For he is beloved by a fellow servant, but thou art made like unto God. But it is a mark of the greatest virtue when we embrace with kindness those who wish to do us harm. Hence it follows, *And do good.* For as water, when cast upon a lighted furnace, extinguishes it, so also reason joined with gentleness. But what water is to fire,

Chrys. Hom. 58. in Gen

such is lowliness and meekness to wrath; and as fire is not extinguished by fire, so neither is anger soothed by anger.

GREG. NYSS. But man ought to shun that baneful anxiety with which he seeks from the poor man increase of his money and gold, exacting a profit of barren metals. Hence He adds, *And lend, hoping for nothing again, &c.* If a man should call the harsh calculation of interest, theft, or homicide, he will not err. For what is the difference, whether a man by digging under a wall become possessed of property, or possess it unlawfully by the compulsory rate of interest? BASIL. Now this mode of avarice is rightly called in the Greek τόκος, from producing, because of the fruitfulness of the evil. Animals in course of time grow up and produce, but interest as soon as it is born begins to bring forth. Animals which bring forth most rapidly cease soonest from breeding, but the money of the avaricious goes on increasing with time. Animals when they transfer their bringing forth to their own young, themselves cease to breed, but the money of the covetous both produces an increase, and renews the capital. Touch not then the destructive monster. For what advantage that the poverty of to-day is escaped, if it falls upon us repeatedly, and is increased? Reflect then how canst thou restore thyself? Whence shall thy money be so multiplied as that it will partly relieve thy want, partly refresh thy capital, and besides bring forth interest? But thou sayest, How shall I get my living? I answer, work, serve, last of all beg; any thing is more tolerable than borrowing upon interest. But thou sayest, what is that lending to which the hope of repayment is not attached? Consider the excellence of the words, and thou wilt admire the mercifulness of the author. When thou art about to give to a poor man from regard to divine charity, it is both a lending and a gift; a gift indeed, because no return is hoped for; lending, because of the beneficence of God, who restores it in its turn. Hence it follows, *And great shall be your reward.* Dost thou not wish the Almighty to be bound to restore to thee? Or, should He make some rich citizen thy security, dost thou accept him, but reject God standing as security for the poor? CHRYS. Observe the

Greg. Orat. cont. usurar.

Basil. Hom. in Ps. 14.

Chrys. Hom. 3. in Gen.

wonderful nature of lending, one receives and another binds himself for his debts, giving a hundred fold at the present time, and in the future eternal life. Ambrose. How great the reward of mercy which is received into the privilege of divine adoption! For it follows, *And ye shall be the sons of the Highest.* Follow then mercy, that ye may obtain grace. Widely spread is the mercy of God; He pours His rain upon the unthankful, the fruitful earth refuses not its increase to the evil. Hence it follows, *For He is kind to the unthankful, and to the evil.* Bede. Either by giving them temporal gifts, or by inspiring His heavenly gifts with a wonderful grace.

Ps. 82. 6.

Cyril. Great then is the praise of mercy. For this virtue makes us like unto God, and imprints upon our souls certain signs as it were of a heavenly nature. Hence it follows, *Be ye then merciful, as your heavenly Father also is merciful.* Athan. That is to say, that we beholding His mercies, what good things we do should do them not with regard to men, but to Him, that we may obtain our rewards from God, not from men.

Athan Orat. 3. cont. Arian.

37. Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven:

38. Give, and it shall be given unto you: good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

Ambrose. The Lord added, that we must not readily judge others, lest when conscious of guilt thyself, thou shouldest be compelled to pass sentence upon another. Chrys. Judge not thy superior, that is, thou a disciple must not judge thy master, nor a sinner the innocent. Thou must not blame them, but advise and correct with love; neither must we pass judgment in doubtful and indifferent matters, which bear no resemblance to sin, or which are not serious or forbidden. Cyril. He here expresses that worst inclination of our thoughts or hearts,

which is the first beginning and origin of a proud disdain. For although it becomes men to look into themselves and walk after God, this they do not, but look into the things of others, and while they forget their own passions, behold the infirmities of some, and make them a subject of reproach. CHRYS. You will not easily find any one, whether a father of a family or an inhabitant of the cloister, free from this error. But these are the wiles of the tempter. For he who severely sifts the fault of others, will never obtain acquittal for his own. Hence it follows, *And ye shall not be judged.* For as the merciful and meek man dispels the rage of sinners, so the harsh and cruel adds to his own crimes. GREG. NYSS. Be not then rash to judge harshly of your servants, lest ye suffer the like. For passing judgment calls down a heavier condemnation; as it follows, *Condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned.* For He does not forbid judgment with pardon. BEDE. Now in a short sentence He concisely sums up all that He had enjoined with respect to our conduct towards our enemies, saying, *Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven,* wherein He bids us forgive injuries, and shew kindness, and our sins shall be forgiven us, and we shall receive eternal life. CYRIL. But that we shall receive more abundant recompense from God, who gives bountifully to those who love Him, He explains as follows, *Good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall they give into your bosom.* THEOPHYL. As if He says, As when you wish to measure meal without sparing, you press it down, shake it together, and let it pour over abundantly; so the Lord will give a large and overflowing measure into your bosom. AUG. Aug. de Qu. Ev. l. ii. q. 8.
But He says, *shall they give,* because through the merits of those to whom they have given even a cup of cold water in Matt. 10, 42.
the name of a disciple, shall they be thought worthy to receive a heavenly reward. It follows, *For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.* BASIL. For according to the same measure with which each Basil. Hom. in Ps. 61.
one of you metes, that is, in doing good works or sinning, will he receive reward or punishment. THEOPHYL. But some one will put the subtle question, "If the return is made overabundantly, how is it the same measure?" to which we answer, that He said not, "In just as great a measure shall

it be measured to you again, but in the same measure." For he who has shewn mercy, shall have mercy shewn unto him, and this is measuring again with the same measure; but our Lord spoke of *the measure running over,* because to such a one He will shew mercy a thousand times. So also in judging; for he that judges and afterwards is judged receives the same measure. But as far as he was judged the more severely that he judged one like unto himself, was the measure running over. CYRIL. But the Apostle explains
2 Cor. 6, 9. this when he says, *He who sows sparingly,* (that is, scantily, and with a niggardly hand,) *shall also reap sparingly,* (that is, not abundantly,) and he who sows blessings, shall reap also blessings, that is, bountifully. But if a man has not, and performs not, he is not guilty. For a man is accepted in that which he has, not in that which he has not.

39. And He spake a parable unto them, Can the blind lead the blind? shall they not both fall into the ditch?

40. The disciple is not above his master: but every one that is perfect shall be as his master.

41. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

42. Either how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye.

CYRIL. The Lord added to what had gone before a very necessary parable, as it is said, *And He spake a parable to them,* for His disciples were the future teachers of the world, and it therefore became them to know the way of a virtuous life, having their minds illuminated as it were by a divine brightness, that they should not be blind leaders of the blind.

And then He adds, *Can the blind lead the blind?* But if any should chance to attain unto an equal degree of virtue with their teachers, let them stand in the measure of their teachers, and follow their footsteps. Hence it follows, *The disciple is not above his master.* Hence also Paul says, *Be* 1 Cor.
ye also followers of me, as I am of Christ. Since Christ 1, 11.
therefore judged not, why judgest thou? for He came not to judge the world, but to shew mercy. THEOPHYL. Or else, If thou judgest another, and in the very same way sinnest thyself, art not thou like to the blind leading the blind? For how canst thou lead him to good when thou also thyself committest sin? For the disciple is not above his master. If therefore thou sinnest, who thinkest thyself a master and guide, where will he be who is taught and led by thee? For he will be the perfect disciple who is as his master. BEDE. Or the sense of this sentence depends upon the former, in which we are enjoined to give alms, and forgive injuries. If, says He, anger has blinded thee against the violent, and avarice against the grasping, how canst thou with thy corrupt heart cure his corruption? If even thy Master Christ, who as God might revenge His injuries, chose rather by patience to render His persecutors more merciful, it is surely binding on his disciples, who are but men, to follow the same rule of perfection. AUG. Or, He Aug. de Qu. Ev. l. ii. q. 9.
has added the words, *Can the blind lead the blind,* in order that they might not expect to receive from the Levites that measure which He says, *They shall give into thy bosom,* because they gave tithes to them. And these He calls blind, because they received not the Gospel, that the people might the rather now begin to hope for that reward through the disciples of the Lord, whom wishing to point out as His imitators, He added, *The disciple is not above his master.*

THEOPHYL. But the Lord introduces another parable taken from the same figure, as follows, *But why seest thou the mote* (that is, the slight fault) *which is in thy brother's eye, but the beam which is in thine own eye* (that is, thy great sin) *thou regardest not?* BEDE. Now this has reference to the previous parable, in which He forewarned them that the blind cannot be led by the blind, that is, the sinner corrected by the sinner. Hence it is said, *Or, how canst thou say to thy*

brother, Brother, let me cast out the mote that is in thine eye, if thou seest not the beam that is in thine own eye? CYRIL. As if He said, How can he who is guilty of grievous sins, (which He calls the beam,) condemn him who has sinned only slightly, or even in some cases not at all? For this the mote signifies. THEOPHYL. But these words are applicable to all, and especially to teachers, who while they punish the least sins of those who are put under them, leave their own unpunished. Wherefore the Lord calls them hypocrites, because to this end judge they the sins of others, that they themselves might seem just. Hence it follows, *Thou hypocrite, first cast the beam out of thine own eye, &c.* CYRIL. That is to say, first shew thyself clean from great sins, and then afterwards shalt thou give counsel to thy neighbour, who is guilty only of slight sins. BASIL. In truth, self-knowledge seems the most important of all. For not only the eye, looking at outward things, fails to exercise its sight upon itself, but our understanding also, though very quick in apprehending the sin of another, is slow to perceive its own defects.

Basil. Hom. 9, in Hexameron.

43. For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

44. For every tree is known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes.

45. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.

BEDE. Our Lord continues the words which He had begun against the hypocrites, saying, *For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit;* i.e. as if He says, If thou wouldest have a true and unfeigned righteousness, what thou settest forth in words make up also in works, for the hypocrite though he pretends to be good is not good, who doeth evil works;

and the innocent though he be blamed, is not therefore evil, who doeth good works. TITUS BOS. But take not these words to thyself as an encouragement to idleness, for the tree is moved conformably to its nature, but thou hast the exercise of free will; and every barren tree has been ordained for some good, but thou wert created unto the good work of virtue. ISIDORE PELEUS. He does not then exclude repentance, but a continuance in evil, which as long as it is evil cannot bring forth good fruit, but being converted to virtue, will yield abundance. But what nature is to the tree, our affections are to us. If then a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit, how shall a corrupt heart?

Is. Pel. lib. iv. ep. 81.

CHRYS. But although the fruit is caused by the tree, yet it brings to us the knowledge of the tree, because the distinctive nature of the tree is made evident by the fruit, as it follows, *For every tree is known by its fruit.* CYRIL. Each man's life also will be a criterion of his character. For not by extrinsic ornaments and pretended humility is the beauty of true happiness discovered, but by those things which a man does; of which he gives an illustration, adding, *For of thorns men do not gather figs.*

Chrys. Hom. 42. in Matt.

AMBROSE. On the thorns of this world the fig cannot be found, which as being better in its second fruit, is well fitted to be a similitude of the resurrection. Either because, as you read, *The fig trees have put forth their green figs,* that is, the unripe and worthless fruit came first in the Synagogue; or because our life is imperfect in the flesh, perfect in the resurrection, and therefore we ought to cast far from us worldly cares, which eat into the mind and scorch up the soul, that by diligent culture we may obtain the perfect fruits. This therefore has reference to the world and the resurrection, the next to the soul and the body, as it follows, *Nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes.* Either because no one living in sin obtains fruit to his soul, which like the grape nearest the ground is rotten, on the higher branches becomes ripe; or because no one can escape the condemnations of the flesh, but he whom Christ has redeemed, who as a grape hung on a tree.

Cant. 2, 13.

BEDE. Or I think the thorns and bramble are the cares of the world and the prickings of sin, but the figs and the

grapes are the sweetness of a new life and the warmth of love, but the fig is not gathered from the thorns nor the grape from the bramble, because the mind still debased by the habits of the old man may pretend to, but cannot bring forth the fruits of the new man. But we must know, that as the fruitful palm tree is inclosed and supported by a hedge, and the thorn bearing fruit not its own, preserves it for the use of man, so the words and acts of the wicked wherein they serve the good are not done by the wicked themselves, but by the wisdom of God working upon them.

CYRIL. But having shewn that the good and the bad man may be discerned by their works as a tree by its fruits, he now sets forth the same thing by another figure, saying, *A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good, and the evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth that which is evil.* BEDE. The treasure of the heart is the same as the root of the tree. He therefore who has in his heart the treasure of patience and perfect love, brings forth the best fruits, loving his enemy, and doing the other things which have been taught above. But he who keeps a bad treasure in his heart does the contrary to this. BASIL. The quality of the words shews the heart from which they proceed, plainly manifesting the inclination of our thoughts. Hence it follows, *For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.* CHRYS. For it is a natural consequence when wickedness abounds within, that wicked words are breathed as far as the mouth; and therefore when you hear of a man uttering abominable things, do not suppose that there lies only so much wickedness in him as is expressed in his words, but believe the fountain to be more copious than the stream. BEDE. By the *speaking of the mouth* the Lord signifies all things, which by word, or deed, or thought, we bring forth from the heart. For it is the manner of the Scripture to put words for deeds.

Chrys. Hom. 42. in Matt.

46. And why call ye Me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?

47. Whosoever cometh to Me, and heareth My sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like:

48. He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock.

49. But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth: against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great.

Bede. Lest any one should vainly flatter himself with the words, *Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh,* as if words only and not rather works were required of a Christian, our Lord adds the following, *But why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?* As if He said, Why do ye boast of sending forth the leaves of a right confession, and shew forth no fruit of good works? Cyril. But Lordship both in name and reality belongs only to the Highest Nature. Athan. This is not then the word of man, but the Word of God, manifesting His own birth from the Father, for He is the Lord who is born of the Lord alone. But fear not the quality of Persons, for they are not separate in nature. Athan. in Orat. cont. Sabell.

Cyril. But the advantage which arises from the keeping of the commandments, or the loss from disobedience, he shews as follows; *Whosoever cometh to Me, and heareth My sayings, he is like to a man who built his house upon a rock, &c.* Bede. The rock is Christ. He digs deep; by the precepts of humility He plucks out all earthly things from the hearts of the faithful, lest they should serve God from regard to their temporal good. Basil. But lay your foundations upon a rock, that is, lean upon the faith of Christ, so as to persevere immoveable in adversity, whether it come from man or God. Bede. Or the foundation of the house is the resolution to live a good life, which the perfect hearer firmly lays in fulfilling the commandments of God. Ambrose. Or, He teaches that the obedience to heavenly precepts is the foundation of all virtue, by means of which this our house Basil. in Princ Prov.

can be moved neither by the torrent of pleasures, nor by the violence of spiritual wickedness, neither by the storms of this world, nor by the cloudy disputations of heretics; hence it follows, *But the flood came, &c.* BEDE. A flood comes in three ways, either by unclean spirits, or wicked men, or the very restlessness of mind or body; and as far as men trust in their own strength they fall away, but as long as they cling to the immoveable rock they cannot even be shaken.

Chrys. Hom. 24. in Matt. CHRYS. The Lord also shews us that faith profiteth a man nothing, if his manner of life be corrupt. Hence it follows, *But he that heareth and doeth not, is like a man, that without a foundation, built an house upon the earth, &c.* BEDE. The house of the devil is the world which lieth in wickedness, which he builds upon the earth, because those who obey him he drags down from heaven to earth; he builds without foundation, for sin has no foundation, standing not by its own nature, for evil is without substance, which yet whatever it is, grows up in the nature of good. But because the foundation is called so from *fundus*, we may not unfitly understand that *fundamentum* is placed here for *fundus*. As then he who is fallen into a well is kept at the bottom of the well, so the soul falling away remains stationary, as it were at the very bottom, as long as it continues in any measure of sin. But not content with the sin into which it is fallen while daily sinking into worse, it can find no bottom as it were, in the well to which it may fix itself. But every kind of temptation increasing, both the really bad and the feignedly good become worse, until at last they come to everlasting punishment. Hence it follows, *Against which the stream did beat vehemently.* By the force of the stream may be understood the trial of the last judgment, when both houses being finished, *the wicked shall go into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.* CYRIL. Or they build upon the earth without foundation, who upon the quicksand of doubt, which relates to opinion, lay the foundation of their spiritual building, which a few drops of temptation wash away.

(1 John 5, 19.) (Mat. 25, 46.)

Aug. de Con. Ev. ii. 19. AUG. Now this long discourse of our Lord, Luke begins in the same way as Matthew; for each says, *Blessed are the poor.* Then many things which follow in the narration of

each are like, and finally the conclusion of the discourse is found to be altogether the same, I mean with respect to the men who build upon the rock and the sand. It might then easily be supposed that Luke has inserted the same discourse of our Lord, and yet has left out some sentences which Matthew has kept, and likewise put in others which Matthew has not; were it not that Matthew says the discourse was spoken by our Lord on the mountain, but Luke on the plain by our Lord standing. It is not however thought likely from this that these two discourses are separated by a long course of time, because both before and after both have related some things like, or the same. It may however have happened that our Lord was at first on a higher part of the mountain with His disciples alone, and that then He descended with them from the mount, that is, from the summit of the mountain to the flat place, that is, to some level ground, which was on the side of the mountain, and was able to hold large multitudes, and that there He stood until the crowds were gathered together to Him, and afterwards when He sat down His disciples came nearer, and to them and the rest of the multitude who were present, He held the same discourse.

CHAP. VII.

1. Now when He had ended all His sayings in the audience of the people, He entered into Capernaum.

2. And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die.

3. And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto Him the elders of the Jews, beseeching Him that He would come and heal his servant.

4. And when they came to Jesus, they besought Him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom He should do this:

5. For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue.

6. Then Jesus went with them. And when He was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to Him, saying unto Him, Lord, trouble not Thyself: for I am not worthy that Thou shouldest come under my roof:

7. Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto Thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed.

8. For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh: and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.

9. When Jesus heard these things, He marvelled at him, and turned Him about, and said unto the

people that followed Him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

10. And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick.

Titus Bost. When He had strengthened His disciples by more perfect teaching, He goes to Capernaum to work miracles there; as it is said, *When He had ended all His sayings, He entered into Capernaum.* Aug. Here we must understand that He did not enter before He had ended these sayings, but it is not mentioned what space of time intervened between the termination of His discourse, and His entering into Capernaum. For in that interval the leper was cleansed whom Matthew introduced in his proper place. Ambrose. But having finished His teaching, He rightly instructs them to follow the example of His precepts. For straightway the servant of a Gentile centurion is presented to the Lord to be healed. Now the Evangelist, when he said that the servant was about to die, did not err, because he would have died had he not been healed by Christ. Euseb. Although that centurion was strong in battle, and the prefect of the Roman soldiers, yet because his particular attendant lay sick at his house, considering what wonderful things the Saviour had done in healing the sick, and judging that these miracles were performed by no human power, he sends to Him, as unto God, not looking to the visible instrument by which He had intercourse with men; as it follows, *And when he heard of Jesus he sent unto Him, &c.* Aug. How then will that be true which Matthew relates, *A certain centurion came to Him*, seeing that he himself did not come? unless upon careful consideration we suppose that Matthew made use of a general mode of expression. For if the actual arrival is frequently said to be through the means of others, much more may the coming be by others. Not then without reason, (the centurion having gained access to our Lord through others,) did Matthew, wishing to speak briefly, say that this man himself came to Christ, rather than those by whom he sent his message, for the more he believed the nearer he came. Chrys. How again does Matthew tell us that the centurion said, *I am not worthy*

Aug. de Con. Ev. l. ii. c. 20.

Aug. ubi sup.

Chrys. Hom. 26. in Matt.

that Thou shouldest enter under my roof, while Luke says here, that he beseeches Him that He would come. Now it seems to me that Luke sets before us the flatteries of the Jews. For we may believe that when the centurion wished to depart, the Jews drew him back, enticing him, saying, *We will go and bring Him.* Hence also their prayers are full of flattery, for it follows, *But when they came to Jesus, they besought Him instantly, saying that he was worthy.* Although it became them to have said, He himself was willing to come and supplicate Thee, but we detained him, seeing the affliction, and the body which was lying in the house, and so to have drawn out the greatness of his faith; but they would not for envy reveal the faith of the man, lest He should seem some great one to whom the prayers were addressed. But wherein Matthew represents the centurion to be not an Israelite, while Luke says, *he has built us a synagogue,* there is no contradiction, for he might not have been a Jew, and yet built a synagogue. BEDE. But herein they shew, that as by a church, so also by a synagogue, they were wont to mean not only the assembly of the faithful, but also the place where they assembled.

EUSEB. And the elders of the Jews indeed demand favours for a small sum spent in the service of the synagogue, but the Lord not for this, but a higher reason, manifested Himself, wishing in truth to beget a belief in all men by His own power, as it follows, *Then Jesus went with them.* AMBROSE. Which certainly He did not do because He was unable to heal when absent, but that He might set them an example of imitating His humility. He would not go to the son of the nobleman, lest He should seem thereby to have respected his riches; He went immediately here, that He might not seem to have despised the low estate of a centurion's servant. But the centurion laying aside his military pride puts on humility, being both willing to believe and eager to honour; as it follows, *And when He was not far off, he sent unto Him, saying, Trouble not Thyself: for I am not worthy, &c.* For by the power not of man, but of God, he supposed that health was given to man. The Jews indeed alleged his worthiness; but he confessed himself unworthy not only of the benefit, but even of receiving the

Lord under his roof, *For I am not worthy that Thou shouldest enter under my roof.* CHRYS. For as soon as he was freed Chrys. ubi sup. from the annoyance of the Jews, he then sends, saying, Think not that it was from negligence I came not unto Thee, but I counted myself unworthy to receive Thee in my house. AMBROSE. But Luke well says, that friends were sent by the centurion to meet our Lord, lest by his own coming he might seem both to embarrass our Lord, and to have called for a requital of good offices. Hence it follows, *Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto Thee, but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed.*

CHRYS. Here observe that the centurion held a right Chrys. ubi sup. opinion concerning the Lord; he said not, pray, but, command; and in doubt lest He should from humility refuse him, he adds, *For I also am a man set under authority, &c.* BEDE. He says that he though a man subject to the power of the tribune or governor, yet has command over his inferiors, that it might be implied that much more is He who is God, able not only by the presence of His body, but by the services of His angels, to fulfil whatever He wishes. For the weakness of the flesh or the hostile powers were to be subdued both by the word of the Lord and the ministry of the angels. *And to my servant, Do this, &c.* CHRYS. We Chrys. contra Anom. Hom. 17 must here remark, that this word, *Fac*, signifies a command given to a servant. So God when He wished to create man, said not to the Only-begotten, "Make man," but, *Let us make man,* that by the form of unity in the words He might make manifest the equality of the agents. Because then the centurion considered in Christ the greatness of His dominion, therefore saith he, *say in a word. For I also say to my servant.* But Christ blames him not, but confirmed his wishes, as it follows, *When Jesus heard these things, He marvelled.* BEDE. But who had wrought this very faith in him, save He who marvelled? But supposing another had done it, why should He marvel who foreknew it? Because then the Lord marvels, it signifies that we must marvel. For all such feelings when they are spoken of God, are the tokens not of a wonder-struck mind, but of a teaching master.

CHRYS. But that you might see plainly that the Lord said Chrys. Hom. 27. in Matt. this for the instruction of others, the Evangelist wisely ex-

plains it, adding, *Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.* AMBROSE. And indeed if you read it thus, "In none in Israel have I found so great faith," the meaning is simple and easy. But if according to the Greek, "Not even in Israel have I found so great faith," faith of this kind is preferred even to that of the more elect, and those that see God. BEDE. But he speaks not of Patriarchs and Prophets in times far back, but of the men of the present age to whom the faith of the centurion is preferred, because they were instructed in the precepts of the Law and the Prophets, but he with no one to teach him of his own accord believed. AMBROSE. The faith of the master is proved, and the health of the servant established, as it follows, *And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick.* It is possible then that the good deed of a master may advantage his servants, not only through the merit of faith, but the practice of discipline. BEDE. Matthew explains these things more fully, saying that when our Lord said to the centurion, *Go thy way, and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee, the servant was healed in the self-same hour.* But it is the manner of the blessed Luke, to abridge or even purposely to pass by whatever he sees plainly set forth by the other Evangelists, but what he knows to be omitted by them, or briefly touched upon, to more carefully explain.

AMBROSE. Mystically, by the centurion's servant is signified that the Gentile people who were enthralled by the chain of heavenly bondage, and diseased with deadly passions, are to be healed by the mercy of the Lord. BEDE. But the centurion, whose faith is preferred to Israel, represents the elect from the Gentiles, who as it were attended by their hundred soldiers, are exalted by their perfection of spiritual virtues. For the number hundred, which is transferred from the left to the right[a], is frequently put to signify the celestial life. These then must pray to the Lord for those who are still oppressed with fear, in the spirit of bondage. But we of the Gentiles who believe cannot ourselves come to the Lord, whom we are unable to see in the flesh,

[a] The ancients used to count up to a hundred on the left hand and then to change to the right. Bede de Indigit. Jerom. cont. Jovin., lib. 1.

but ought to approach by faith; we must send the elders of the Jews, that is, we must by our suppliant entreaties gain as patrons the greatest men of the Church, who have gone before us to the Lord, who bearing us witness that we have a care to build up the Church, may intercede for our sins. It is well said that Jesus was not far from the house, *for His salvation is nigh unto them that fear Him,* and he who rightly uses the law of nature, in that he does the things which he knows to be good, approaches nigh unto Him who is good. AMBROSE. But the centurion wished not to trouble Jesus, for whom the Jewish people crucified, the Gentiles desire to keep inviolate from injury, and (as touching a mystery) he saw that Christ was not yet able to pierce the hearts of the Gentiles. BEDE. The soldiers and servants who obey the centurion, are the natural virtues which many who come to the Lord will bring with them in great numbers.

THEOPHYL. Or in another way. The centurion must be understood as one who stood foremost among many in wickedness, as long as he possesses many things in this life, i.e. is occupied with many affairs or concerns. But he has a servant, the irrational part of the soul, that is, the irascible and concupiscent part. And he speaks to Jesus, the Jews acting as mediators, that is, the thoughts and words of confession, and immediately he received his servant whole.

11. And it came to pass the day after, that He went into a city called Nain; and many of His disciples went with Him, and much people.

12. Now when He came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her.

13. And when the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not.

14. And He came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. And He said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.

15. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And He delivered him to his mother.

16. And there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited His people.

17. And this rumour of Him went forth throughout all Judæa, and throughout all the region round about.

CYRIL. The Lord joins one miracle upon another. In the former instance He came indeed when called for, but in this He came self-invited; as it is said, *And it came to pass the day after that He went into a city called Nain.* BEDE. Nain is a city of Galilee, within two miles of mount Tabor. But by the divine counsel there were large multitudes accompanying the Lord, that there might be many witnesses of so great a miracle. Hence it follows, *And His disciples went with Him, and much people.* GREG. NYSS. Now the proof of the resurrection we learn not so much from the words as from the works of our Saviour, who, beginning His miracles with the less wonderful, reconciled our faith to far greater. First indeed in the grievous sickness of the centurion's servant, He verged upon the power of resurrection; afterwards with a higher power He led men to the belief in a resurrection, when He raised the widow's son, who was carried out to be buried; as it is said, *Now when He came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother.* TITUS BOST. But some one will say of the centurion's servant, that he was not going to die. That such an one might restrain his rash tongue, the Evangelist explains that the young man whom Christ came upon was already dead, *the only son of a widow.* For it follows, *And she was a widow, and much people of the city was with her.* GREG. NYSS. He has told us the sum of misery in a few words. The mother was a widow, and had no further hope of having children; she had no one upon whom she might look in the place of him that was dead. To him alone she had given suck, he alone made her home cheerful. All that is sweet and precious to a mother, was he alone to her. CYRIL. These were sufferings to excite compassion, and which might well affect to mourning and tears, as it follows, *And when the Lord saw her, He had com-*

Greg. Tract. de Anima et Res. *post med.*

Greg. de hom. Opif. c. 25.

passion on her, saying, Weep not. BEDE. As if He said, Cease to weep for one as dead, whom you shall soon see rise again alive. CHRYS. But when He bids us cease from weeping who consoles the sorrowful, He tells us to receive consolation from those who are now dead, hoping for their resurrection. But life meeting death stops the bier, as it follows, *And He came.* CYRIL. He performs the miracle not only in word, but also touches the bier, to the end that you might know that the sacred body of Christ is powerful to the saving of man. For it is the body of Life and the flesh of the Omnipotent Word, whose power it possesses. For as iron applied to fire does the work of fire, so the flesh, when it is united to the Word, which quickens all things becomes itself also quickening, and the banisher of death. TITUS BOST. But the Saviour is not like to Elias mourning over the son of the widow of Sarepta, nor as Elisha who laid his own body upon the body of the dead, nor as Peter who prayed for Tabitha, but is none other than He who calls those things which be not as though they were, who can speak to the dead as to the living, as it follows, *And He said, Young man.* GREG. NYSS. When He said, *Young man,* He signified that he was in the flower of his age, just ripening into manhood, who but a little while before was the sight of his mother's eyes, just entering upon the time of marriage, the scion of her race, the branch of succession, the staff of her old age.

Tit. Bost.

non occ.

1 Kings 17.

2 Kings 4.

Acts 9, 40

Rom. 4, 17

Greg. ubi sup.

TITUS BOST. But straightway he arose to whom the command was made. For the Divine power is irresistible; there is no delay, no urgency of prayer, as it follows, *And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak, and He gave him to his mother.* These are the signs of a true resurrection, for the lifeless body cannot speak, nor would the mother have carried back to her house her dead and lifeless son. BEDE. But well does the Evangelist testify that the Lord is first moved with compassion for the mother, and then raises her son, that in the one case He might set before us for our imitation an example of piety, in the other He might build up our belief in His wonderful power. Hence it follows, *And there came a fear upon all, and they glorified God, &c.* CYRIL. This was a great thing in an insensible and ungrate-

ful people. For in a short time afterward they would neither esteem Him as a prophet, nor allow that He did aught for the public good. But none of those that dwelt in Judæa were ignorant of this miracle, as it follows, *And this rumour of Him went forth throughout all Judæa.*

non occ. MAXIM. But it is worthy of remark, that seven resurrections are related before our Lord's, of which the first was that of the son of the widow of Sarepta, the second of the Shunammite's son, the third which was caused by the remains of Elisha, the fourth which took place at Nain, as is here related, the fifth of the ruler of the Synagogue's daughter, the sixth of Lazarus, the seventh at Christ's passion, for many bodies of the saints arose. The eighth is that of Christ, who being free from death, remained beyond for a sign that the general resurrection which is to come in the eighth age shall not be dissolved by death, but shall abide never to pass away.

1 Kings 17. 2 Kings 4. 2 Kings 13. Mark 5. John 11. Matt. 27.

BEDE. But the dead man who was carried without the gate of the city in the sight of many, signifies a man rendered senseless by the deadening power of mortal sin, and no longer concealing his soul's death within the folds of his heart, but proclaiming it to the knowledge of the world, through the evidence of words or deeds as through the gate of the city. For the gate of the city, I suppose, is some one of the bodily senses. And he is well said to be the only son of his mother, for there is one mother composed of many individuals, the Church, but every soul that remembers that it is redeemed by the death of the Lord, knows the Church to be a widow. AMBROSE. For this widow surrounded by a great multitude of people seems to be more than the woman who was thought worthy by her tears to obtain the resurrection of her only son, because the Church recalls the younger people from the funeral procession to life by the contemplation of her tears, who is forbid to weep for him to whom resurrection was promised. BEDE. Or the dogma of Novatus is crushed [b], who endeavouring to do away with the purifying of the penitent, denies that the mother Church, weeping for the spiritual extinction of her sons, ought to be consoled by the hope of their restoration to life.

[b] For the heresy of Novatus, see Catena on S. Mark, p. 66, note m.

AMBROSE. This dead man was borne on the bier by the four material elements to the grave, but there was a hope of his rising again because he was borne on wood, which though before it did not benefit us, yet after Christ had touched it, began to profit unto life, that it might be a sign that salvation was to be extended to the people by the wood of the cross. For we lie lifeless on the bier when either the fire of immoderate desire bursts forth, or the cold moisture breaks out, and through the sluggish state of our earthly body the vigour of our minds waxes dull. BEDE. Or the coffin on which the dead is carried is the ill at ease conscience of a desperate sinner. But they who carry him to be buried are either unclean desires, or the allurements of companions, who stood when our Lord touched the bier, because the conscience, when touched by dread of the judgment from on high, often checking its carnal lusts, and those who unjustly praise, returns to itself, and answers its Saviour's call to life. AMBROSE. If then thy sin is so heavy that by thy penitential tears thou canst not thyself wash it out, let the mother Church weep for thee, the multitude standing by; soon shalt thou rise from the dead and begin to speak the words of life; they all shall fear, (for by the example of one all are corrected;) they shall also praise God who has given us such great remedies for escaping death. BEDE. But God has visited His people not only by the one incarnation of His Word, but by ever sending It into our hearts. THEOPHYL. By the widow also you may understand a soul that has lost her husband in the divine word. Her son is the understanding, which is carried out beyond the city of the living. Its coffin is the body, which some indeed have called the tomb. But the Lord touching him raises him up, causing him to become young, and rising from sin he begins to speak and teach others. For before he would not have been believed.

18. And the disciples of John shewed him of all these things.

19. And John calling unto him two of his disciples sent them to Jesus, saying, Art Thou He that should come? or look we for another?

20. When the men were come unto Him, they said, John Baptist hath sent us unto Thee, saying, Art Thou He that should come? or look we for another?

21. And in the same hour He cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many that were blind He gave sight.

22. Then Jesus answering said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the Gospel is preached.

23. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in Me.

Cyril. Certain of his disciples relate to the holy Baptist the miracle which was known to all the inhabitants of Judæa and Galilee, as it follows, *And they told John, &c.* Bede. Not, as it seems to me, in simpleness of heart, but provoked by envy. For in another place also they complain, (John 3, 26.) *Rabbi, He that was with thee beyond Jordan, behold the same baptizeth, and all men come unto Him.* Chrys. But we are then most raised up to Him when we are fallen into straits. John therefore, being cast into prison, takes the opportunity, when his disciples were most in need of Jesus, to send them to Christ. For it follows, *And John calling two of his disciples sent them to Jesus, saying, Art Thou He that should come, &c.* Bede. He says not, Art Thou He that hast come, but, *Art Thou He that should come.* The sense is, Tell me who am to be slain by Herod, and about to descend (ad inferna) into hell, whether I should announce Thee to the souls below as I have announced Thee to those above? or is this not befitting the Son of God, and Thou art going to send another for these sacraments? Cyril. But we must altogether disallow such an opinion. For nowhere do we find the Holy Scriptures stating that John the Baptist foretold to those souls in hell the coming of our Saviour. It is also true to say, that the Baptist was not ignorant of the wonderful mystery of the incarnation of the Only-Begotten, and so

also along with the other things had known this, that our Lord was about to preach the Gospel to those who were in hell, after He had tasted death for all living as well as dead. But since the word of Holy Scripture indeed declared that Christ would come as the Lord and Chief, but the others were sent as servants before Him, therefore was the Lord and Saviour of all called by the prophets, He who cometh, or Who is to come; according to that, *Blessed is he who* Ps. 118,
cometh in the name of the Lord; and, *A little while, and He* 26. Hab. 2, 3.
who is to come shall come, and will not tarry. The blessed Baptist therefore, receiving as it were this name from Holy Scripture, sent certain of his disciples to seek whether it was indeed *He who cometh*, or, *Who is to come.*

AMBROSE. But how could it come to pass, that Him of whom he said, *Behold Him who taketh away the sins of the world*, he should still not believe to be the Son of God? For either it is presumption to attribute to Christ a divine action ignorantly, or it is unbelief to have doubted concerning the Son of God. But some suppose of John himself that he was indeed so great a prophet as to acknowledge Christ, but still as not a doubting, but pious, prophet disbelieved that He would die, whom he believed was about to come. Not therefore in his faith but in his piety, he doubted; as Peter also when he said, *Be it far from Thee, Lord; this* Matt. 16,
shall not be unto Thee. CYRIL. Or he asks the question by 22. Cyril.
economy. For as the forerunner he knew the mystery of Thes. lib.
Christ's passion, but that his disciples might be convinced 11. c. 4.
how great was the excellence of the Saviour, he sent the more understanding of them, instructing them to enquire and learn from the very words of the Saviour, whether it was He who was expected; as it is added, *But when the men were come unto Him, they said, John the Baptist hath sent us unto Thee, saying, Art Thou He, &c.* But He knowing as God with what intention John had sent them, and the cause of their coming, was at the time performing many miracles, as it follows, *And in the same hour He healed many of their infirmities, &c.* He said not positively to them *I am He*, but rather leads them to the certainty of the fact, in order that receiving their faith in Him, with their reason agreeing thereto, they might return to him who sent them.

Hence He made not answer to the words, but to the intention of him who sent them ; as it follows, *And Jesus answering said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things you have seen and heard:* as if He said, Go and tell John the things which ye have heard indeed through the Prophets, but have seen accomplished by Me. For He was then performing those things which the prophets prophesied He would do ; that is of which it is added, *For the blind see, the lame walk.* AMBROSE. An ample testimony surely that the Prophets acknowledged the Lord. For of the Lord
Ps. 146, 7—10. Himself it was prophesied, that *the Lord giveth food to the hungry, raiseth up them that are bowed down, looseth the prisoners, openeth the eyes of the blind, and that he who doeth these things shall reign for ever.* Such then are not the tokens of human but divine power. But these are found
Tob. 11. seldom or not at all before the Gospel. Tobias alone received sight, and this was the cure of an Angel, not of a
1 Kings 17. man. Elias raised the dead, but he prayed and wept, and
2 Kings 5. then commanded. Elisha caused the cleansing of a leper : yet then the cause was not so much in the authority of the command as in the figure of the mystery. THEOPHYL. These
Isa. 35, 4—6. are also the words of Elias, saying, *The Lord Himself shall come and save us. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart.*

BEDE. And what is not less than these, *the poor have the Gospel preached to them,* that is, the poor are enlightened by the Spirit, or hidden treasures, that there might be no difference between the rich and the poor. These things prove the faith of the Master, when all who can be saved by Him are equal. AMBROSE. But still these are but slight examples of the testimony to the Lord. The full assurance of faith is the cross of the Lord, His death and burial. Hence He adds, *And blessed is he who shall not be offended in Me.* For the cross may cause offence, even to the elect. But there is no greater testimony than this of a divine person. For there is nothing which seems to be more surpassing the nature of man than that one should offer Himself for the whole world. CYRIL. Or else, He wished by this to shew that whatever was passing in their hearts, could not be hid

from His sight. For they were those who were offended at Him. AMBROSE. But we have before said, that mystically John was the type of the Law, which was the forerunner of Christ. John then sends his disciples to Christ, that they might obtain the filling up of their knowledge, for Christ is the fulfilling of the Law. And perhaps those disciples are the two nations, of whom the one of the Jews believed, the other of the Gentiles believed because they heard. They wished then to see, because *blessed are the eyes that see.* But when they shall have come to the Gospel, and found that the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, then shall they say, "We have seen with our eyes," for we seem to ourselves to see Him whom we read of. Or perhaps through the instrumentality of a certain part of our Body[a] we all seem to have traced out the course of our Lord's passion; for faith comes through the few to the many. The Law then announces that Christ will come, the writings of the Gospel prove that He has come. operatrice

24. And when the messengers of John were departed, He began to speak unto the people concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness for to see? A reed shaken with the wind?

25. But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they which are gorgeously apparelled, and live delicately, are in kings' courts.

26. But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet.

27. This is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send My messenger before Thy face, which shall prepare Thy way before Thee.

28. For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.

[a] St. Ambrose seems from the context by "our Body" to signify the Church.

Cyril. ubi sup. CYRIL. The Lord, knowing the secrets of men, foresaw that some would say, If until now John is ignorant of Jesus, how did he shew Him to us, saying, *Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world?* To quench therefore this feeling which had taken possession of them, He prevented the injury which might arise from the offence, as it follows, *And when the messengers of John were departed, He began to speak unto the people concerning John, What went ye out for to see? A reed shaken in the wind?* As if He said, Ye marvelled at John the Baptist, and oftentimes came to see him, passing over long journeys in the desert; surely in vain, if you think him so fickle as to be like a reed bending down whichever way the wind moves it. For such he appears to be, who lightly avows his ignorance of the things which he knows. non occ. TIT. BOST. But you went not out into the desert, (where there is no pleasantness,) leaving your cities, except as caring for this man. Simeon. GREEK EX. Now these things were spoken by our Lord after the departure of John's disciples, for He would not utter the praises of the Baptist while they were present, lest His words should be counted as those of a flatterer. AMBROSE. Not unmeaningly then is the character of John praised there, who preferred the way of righteousness to the love of life, and swerved not through fear of death. For this world seems to be compared to a desert, into which, as yet barren and uncultivated, the Lord says we must not so enter as to regard men puffed up with a fleshly mind, and devoid of inward virtue, and vaunting themselves in the heights of frail worldly glory, as a kind of example and model for our imitation. And such being exposed to the storms of this world, and tossed to and fro by a restless life, are rightly compared to a reed.

ubi sup. GREEK EX. We have also an infallible testimony to John's way of life in his manner of clothing, and his imprisonment, into which he never would have been cast had he known how to court princes; as it follows, *But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed with soft raiment? Behold they who are gorgeously apparelled, and live delicately, are in kings' houses.* By being clothed with soft raiment, he signifies men who live luxuriously. Chrys. Hom. 29. in Ep. ad Heb. CHRYS. But a soft garment relaxes the austerity of the soul; and if worn by a hard and

rigorous body, soon, by such effeminacy, makes it frail and delicate. But when the body becomes softer, the soul must also share the injury; for generally its workings correspond with the conditions of the body. CYRIL. How then could a religious strictness, so great that it subdued to itself all fleshly lusts, sink down to such ignorance, except from a frivolity of mind, which is not fostered by austerities, but by worldly delights. If then ye imitate John, as one who cared not for pleasure, award him also the strength of mind, which befits his continence. But if strictness no more tends to this than a life of luxury, why do you, not respecting those who live delicately, admire the inhabitant of the desert, and his wretched garment of camel's hair? CHRYS. By each of these sayings, He shews John to be neither naturally nor easily shaken or diverted from any purpose. AMBROSE. And although very many become effeminate by the use of softer garments, yet here other garments seem to be meant, namely, our mortal bodies, by which our souls are clothed. Again, luxurious acts and habits are soft garments, but those whose languid limbs are wasted away in luxuries are shut out of the kingdom of heaven, whom the rulers of this world and of darkness have taken captive. For these are the kings who exercise tyranny over those who are their fellows in their own works.

Cyril. ubi sup.

Chrys. Hom. 37. in Matt.

CYRIL. But perhaps it does not concern us to excuse John upon this ground, for you confess that he is worthy of imitation, hence He adds, *But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Verily I say unto you, more than a prophet.* For the prophets foretold that Christ would come, but John not only foretold that He would come, but also declared Him to be present, saying, *Behold the Lamb of God.* AMBROSE. Indeed, greater than a prophet (or more than a prophet) was he in whom the prophets terminate; for many desired to see Him whom he saw, whom he baptized. CYRIL. Having then described his character by the place where he dwelt, by his clothing, and from the crowds who went to see him, He introduces the testimony of the prophet, saying, *This is he of whom it is written, Behold, I send My angel.* TITUS BOST. He calls a man an angel, not because he was by nature an angel, for he was by nature a man, but because

Cyril. ubi sup.

Cyril. ubi sup.

Mal. 3, 1.

he exercised the office of an angel, in heralding the advent of Christ. GREEK EX. But by the words which follow, *Before Thy face,* He signifies nearness of time, for John appeared to men close to the coming of Christ. Wherefore must he indeed be considered more than a prophet, for those also who in battle fight close to the sides of kings, are their most distinguished and greatest friends.

ubi sup.

AMBROSE. But he prepared the way of the Lord not only in the order of birth according to the flesh, and as the messenger of faith, but also as the forerunner of His glorious passion. Hence it follows, *Who shall prepare Thy way before Thee.* AMBROSE. But if Christ also is a prophet, how is this man greater than all? But it is said, among those born of woman, not of a virgin. For He was greater than those, whose equal he might be in way of birth, as it follows, *For I say unto you, of those that are born of woman, there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist.* CHRYS. The voice of the Lord is indeed sufficient to bear testimony to John's preeminence among men. But any one will find the real facts of the case confirming the same, by considering his food, his manner of life, the loftiness of his mind. For he dwelt on earth as one who had come down from heaven, casting no care upon his body, his mind raised up to heaven, and united to God alone, taking no thought for worldly things; his conversation grave and gentle, for with the Jewish people he dealt honestly and zealously, with the king boldly, with his own disciples mildly. He did nothing idle or trifling, but all things becomingly. ISID. PELEUS. John was also greatest among those that are born of women, because he prophesied from the very womb of his mother, and though in darkness, was not ignorant of the light which had already come.

Chrys. ubi sup.

Isid. lib. 1. Ep. 33.

AMBROSE. Lastly, so impossible is it that there should be any comparison between John and the Son of God, that he is counted even below the angels; as it follows, *But he that is least in the kingdom of God, is greater than he.* BEDE. These words may be understood in two ways. For either He called that the kingdom of God, which we have not yet received, (in which are the Angels,) and the very least among them is greater than any righteous man, who bears about

a body, which weighs down the soul: or if by the kingdom of God be meant to be understood the Church of this time, the Lord referred to Himself, who in the time of His birth came after John, but was greater in divine authority, and the power of the Lord. Moreover, according to the first explanation, the distinction is as follows, *But he who is least in the kingdom of God*, and then it is added, *is greater than he.* According to the latter, *But he who is least*, and then added, *is greater in the kingdom of God than he.* CHRYS. For He adds this, that the abundant praise of John might not give the Jews a pretext to prefer John to Christ. But do not suppose that He spoke comparatively of His being greater than John. AMBROSE. For He is of another nature, which bears not comparison with human kind. For there can be no comparing of God with men. CYRIL. But in a mystery, when shewing the superiority of John among those that are born of women, He places in opposition something greater, namely, Himself who was born by the Holy Spirit the Son of God. For the kingdom of the Lord is the Spirit of God. Although then as respects works and holiness, we may be inferior to those who attained unto the mystery of the law, whom John represents, yet through Christ we have greater things, being made partakers of the Divine nature.

Chrys. ubi sup.

29. And all the people that heard Him, and the Publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John.

30. But the Pharisees and Lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.

31. And the Lord said, Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation? and to what are they like?

32. They are like unto children sitting in the marketplace, and calling one to another, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept.

33. For John the Baptist came neither eating

bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil.

34. The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of Publicans and sinners!

35. But wisdom is justified of all her children.

Chrys. Hom. 37. in Matt. CHRYS. Having declared the praises of John, He next exposes the great fault of the Pharisees and lawyers, who would not after the publicans receive the baptism of John. Hence it is said, *And all the people that heard Him, and the Publicans, justified God.* AMBROSE. God is justified by baptism, wherein men justify themselves confessing their sins. For he that sins and confesses his sin unto God, justifies God, submitting himself to Him who overcometh, and hoping for grace from Him; God therefore is justified by baptism, in which there is confession and pardon of sin. EUSEB. Because also they believed, they justified God, for He appeared just to them in all that He did. But the disobedient conduct of the Pharisees in not receiving John, Ps. 51, 4. accorded not with the words of the prophet, *That Thou mightest be justified when Thou speakest.* Hence it follows, *But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God, &c.* BEDE. These words were spoken either in the person of the Evangelist, or, as some think, of the Saviour; but when he says, *against themselves,* he means that he who rejects the grace of God, does it against himself. Or, they are blamed as foolish and ungrateful for being unwilling to receive the counsel of God, sent *to* themselves. The counsel then is of God, because He ordained salvation by the passion and death of Christ, which the Pharisees and lawyers despised. AMBROSE. Let us not then despise (as the Pharisees did) the counsel of God, which is in the baptism of John, that is, the Is. 9, 6. LXX. counsel which the Angel of great counsel searches out. No one despises the counsel of man. Who then shall reject the counsel of God?

CYRIL. There was a certain play among the Jewish children of this kind. A company of boys were collected together, who, mocking the sudden changes in the affairs of this

life, some of them sang, some mourned, but the mourners did not rejoice with those that rejoiced, nor did those who rejoiced fall in with those that wept. They then rebuked each other in turn with the charge of want of sympathy. That such were the feelings of the Jewish people and their rulers, Christ implied in the following words, spoken in the person of Christ; *Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation, and to what are they like? They are like to children sitting in the market-place.* BEDE. The Jewish generation is compared to children, because formerly they had prophets for their teachers, of whom it is said, *Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast Thou perfected praise.* AMBROSE. But the prophets sung, repeating in spiritual strains their oracles of the common salvation; they wept, soothing with mournful dirges the hard hearts of the Jews. The songs were not sung in the market-place, nor in the streets, but in Jerusalem. For that is the Lord's forum, in which the laws of His heavenly precepts are framed. GREG. NYSS. But singing and lamentation are nothing else but the breaking forth, the one indeed of joy, the other of sorrow. Now at the sound of a tune played upon a musical instrument, man by the concordant beating of his feet, and motion of his body, pourtrays his inward feelings. Hence He says, *We have sung, and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept.* AUG. Now these words have reference to John and Christ. For when He says, *We have mourned, and ye have not wept*, it is in allusion to John, whose abstinence from meat and drink signified penitential sorrow; and hence He adds in explanation, *For John came neither eating bread, nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil.* CYRIL. They take upon themselves to slander a man worthy of all admiration. They say that he who mortifies the law of sin which is in his members hath a devil. AUG. But His words, *We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced*, refer to the Lord Himself, who by using meats and drinks as others did, represented the joy of His kingdom. Hence it follows, *The Son of man came eating and drinking, &c.* TIT. BOST. For Christ would not abstain from this food, lest He should give a handle to heretics, who say that the creatures of God are bad, and blame flesh and wine.

Greg. Hom. 6. in Eccl.

Aug. de Quæst. Ev. l. ii. q. 11.

Aug. ubi sup.

Cyril. But where could they point out the Lord as gluttonous? For Christ is found every where repressing excess, and leading men to temperance. But He associated with publicans and sinners. Hence they said against Him, *He is a friend of Publicans and sinners,* though He could in no wise fall into sin, but on the contrary was to them the cause of salvation. For the sun is not polluted though sending its rays over all the earth, and frequently falling upon unclean bodies. Neither will the Sun of righteousness be hurt by associating with the bad. But let no one attempt to place his own condition on a level with Christ's greatness, but let each considering his own infirmity avoid having dealing with such men, for "evil communications corrupt good manners." It follows, *And wisdom is justified of all her children.* Ambrose. The Son of God is wisdom, by nature, not by growth, which is justified by baptism, when it is not rejected through obstinacy, but through righteousness is acknowledged the gift of God. Herein then is the justification of God, if He seems to transfer His gifts not to the unworthy and guilty, but to those who are through baptism holy and just. Chrys. (Chrys. Hom. in Ps. 108.) But by the children of wisdom, He means the wise. For Scripture is accustomed to indicate the bad rather by their sin than their name, but to call the good the children of the virtue which characterizes them. Ambrose. He well says, *of all,* for justice is reserved for all, that the faithful may be taken up, the unbelievers cast out. Aug. (Aug. ubi sup.) Or, when He says, *wisdom is justified of all her children,* He shews that the children of wisdom understand that righteousness consists neither in abstaining from nor eating food, but in patiently enduring want. For not the use of such things, but the coveting after them, must be blamed; only let a man adapt himself to the kind of food of those with whom he lives.

36. And one of the Pharisees desired Him that He would eat with him. And He went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat.

37. And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in

the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment,

38. And stood at His feet behind Him weeping, and began to wash His feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed His feet, and anointed them with the ointment.

39. Now when the Pharisee which had bidden Him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if He were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth Him: for she is a sinner.

40. And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on.

41. There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty.

42. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most?

43. Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And He said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged.

44. And He turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for My feet: but she hath washed My feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head.

45. Thou gavest Me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss My feet.

46. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed My feet with ointment.

47. Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.

48. And He said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.

49. And they that sat at meat with Him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also?

50. And He said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee: go in peace.

Bede. Having said just before, *And the people that heard Him justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John,* the same Evangelist builds up in deed what he had proposed in word, namely, wisdom justified by the righteous and the penitent, saying, *And one of the Pharisees desired Him, &c.*

Greg. Hom. de Mul. Peccat. Greg. Nyss. This account is full of precious instruction. For there are very many who justify themselves, being puffed up with the dreamings of an idle fancy, who before the time of judgment comes, separate themselves as lambs from the herds, not willing even to join in eating with the many, and hardly with those who go not to extremes, but keep the middle path in life. St. Luke, the physician of souls rather than of bodies, represents therefore our Lord and Saviour most mercifully visiting others, as it follows, *And He went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat.* Not that He should share any of his faults, but might impart somewhat of His own righteousness.

Cyril. A woman of corrupt life, but testifying her faithful affection, comes to Christ, as having power to release her from every fault, and to grant her pardon for the crimes she had committed. For it follows, *And behold a woman in the city, which was a sinner, brought an alabaster box of ointment.* Bede. Alabaster is a kind of white marble tinged with various colours, which is generally used for vessels holding ointment, because it is said to be the best sort for preserving

Greg. in Hom. 33. in Ev. the ointment sweet. Greg. For this woman, beholding the spots of her shame, ran to wash them at the fountain of mercy, and blushed not at seeing the guests, for since she was courageously ashamed of herself within, she thought there was nothing which could shame her from without. Observe with what sorrow she is wrung who is not ashamed

Greg. ubi sup. to weep even in the midst of a feast! Greg. Nyss. But to

mark her own unwortniness, she stands behind with downcast eyes, and with her hair thrown about embraces His feet, and washing them with her tears, betokened a mind distressed at her state, and imploring pardon. For it follows, *And standing behind, she began to wash His feet with her tears.* GREG. For her eyes which once coveted after earthly things, she was now wearing out with penitential weeping. She once displayed her hair for the setting off of her face, she now wiped her tears with her hair. As it follows, *And she wiped them with the hairs of her head.* She once uttered proud things with her mouth, but kissing the feet of the Lord, she impressed her lips on the footsteps of her Redeemer. She once used ointment for the perfume of her body; what she had unworthily applied to herself, she now laudably offered to God. As it follows, *And she anointed with ointment.* As many enjoyments as she had in herself, so many offerings did she devise out of herself. She converts the number of her faults into the same number of virtues, that as much of her might wholly serve God in her penitence, as had despised God in her sin. CHRYS. Thus the harlot became then more honourable than the virgins. For no sooner was she inflamed with penitence, than she burst forth in love for Christ. And these things indeed which have been spoken of were done outwardly, but those which her mind pondered within itself, were much more fervent. God alone beheld them.

Greg. in Hom. 33. in Evang.

Chrys. Hom. 6. in Matt.

GREG. But the Pharisee beholding these things despises them, and finds fault, not only with the woman who was a sinner, but with the Lord who received her, as it follows, *Now when the Pharisee who had bidden Him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if He were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is which toucheth Him.* We see the Pharisee really proud in himself, and hypocritically righteous, blaming the sick woman for her sickness, the physician for his aid. The woman surely if she had come to the feet of the Pharisee would have departed with the heel lifted up against her. For he would have thought that he was polluted by another's sin, not having sufficient of his own real righteousness to fill him. So also some gifted with the priests' office, if perchance they have done

Greg. ubi sup.

any just thing outwardly or slightly, forthwith despise those who are put under them, and look with disdain on sinners who are of the people. But when we behold sinners, we must first bewail ourselves for their calamity, since we perhaps have had and are certainly liable to a similar fall. But it is necessary that we should carefully distinguish, for we are bound to make distinction in vices, but to have compassion on nature. For if we must punish the sinner, we must cherish a brother. But when by penance he has himself punished his own deed, our brother is no more a sinner, for he punished in himself what Divine justice condemned. The Physician was between two sick persons, but the one preserved her faculties in the fever, the other lost his mental perception. For she wept at what she had done; but the Pharisee, elated with a false sense of righteousness, overrated the vigour of his own health.

Tit. Bost. But the Lord not hearing his words, but perceiving his thoughts, shewed Himself to be the Lord of Prophets, as it follows, *And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have something to say unto thee.* Gloss. And this indeed He spake in answer to his thoughts; and the Pharisee was made more attentive by these words of our Lord, as it is said, *And he saith, Master, say on.* Greg. A parable concerning two debtors is opposed to him, of whom the one owed more, the other less; as it follows, *There was a certain creditor, which had two debtors, &c.* Tit. Bost. As if He said, Nor art thou without debts. What then! If thou art involved in fewer debts, boast not thyself, for thou art still in need of pardon. Then He goes on to speak of pardon, *And when they had nothing to pay, he freely forgave them both.* Gloss. For no one can of himself escape the debt of sin, but only by obtaining pardon through the grace of God. Greg. But both debtors being forgiven, the Pharisee is asked which most loved the forgiver of the debts. For it follows, *Who then will love him most?* To which he at once answers, *I suppose, that he to whom he forgave most.* And here we must remark, that while the Pharisee is convicted upon his own grounds, the madman carries the rope by which he will be bound; as it follows, *But He said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged.* The good deeds of the sin-

Gloss. non occ. v. Lyra in loc.

Greg. ubi sup.

Gloss. non occ.

Greg. ubi sup.

ful woman are enumerated to him, and the evils of the pretended righteous; as it follows, *And He turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thy house, thou gavest Me no water for My feet, but she hath washed My feet with her tears.* TIT. BOST. As if He said, To provide water is easy, to pour forth tears is not easy. Thou hast not provided even what was at hand, she hath poured forth what was not at hand; for washing My feet with her tears, she washed away her own stains. She wiped them with her hair, that so she might draw to herself the sacred moisture, and by that by which she once enticed youth to sin, might now attract to herself holiness.

CHRYS. But as after the breaking of a violent storm there comes a calm, so when tears have burst forth, there is peace, and gloomy thoughts vanish; and as by water and the Spirit, so by tears and confession we are again made clean. Hence it follows, *Wherefore I say unto you, Her sins which are many are forgiven, for she loveth much.* For those who have violently plunged into evil, will in time also eagerly follow after good, being conscious to what debts they have made themselves responsible. GREG. The more then the heart of the sinner is burnt up by the great fire of charity, so much the more is the rust of sin consumed. TIT. BOST. But it more frequently happens that he who has sinned much is purified by confession, but he who has sinned little, refuses from pride to come to be healed thereby. Hence it follows, *But to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.* CHRYS. We have need then of a fervent spirit, for nothing hinders a man from becoming great. Let then no sinner despair, no virtuous man fall asleep; neither let the one be self-confident, for often the harlot shall go before him, nor the other distrustful, for he may even surpass the foremost. Hence it is also here added, *But He said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven thee.*

Chrys. Hom. 6. in Matt.

Greg. Hom. 33. in Evan.

Chrys. Hom. 67. in Matt.

GREG. Behold she who had come sick to the Physician was healed, but because of her safety others are still sick; for it follows, *And they that sat at meat began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also.* But the heavenly Physician regards not those sick, whom He sees to be made still worse by His remedy, but her whom He had

Greg. ubi sup.

healed He encourages by making mention of her own piety; as it follows, *But He said unto the woman, Thy faith hath made thee whole;* for in truth she doubted not that she would receive what she sought for. THEOPHYL. But after having forgiven her sins, He stops not at the forgiveness of sins, but adds good works, as it follows, *Go in peace,* i. e. in righteousness, for righteousness is the reconciliation of man to God, as sin is the enmity between God and man; as if He said, Do all things which lead you to the peace of God. AMBROSE. Now in this place many seem to be perplexed with the question, whether the Evangelists do not appear to have differed concerning the faith. GREEK Ex. For since the four Evangelists relate that Christ was anointed with ointment by a woman, I think that there were three women, differing according to the quality of each, their mode of action, and the difference of times. John, for example, relates that Mary, the sister of Lazarus, six days before the Passover, anointed the feet of Jesus in her own house; but Matthew, after that the Lord had said, *You know that after two days will be the Passover,* adds, that in Bethany, at the house of Simon the leper, a woman poured ointment upon the head of our Lord, but did not anoint His feet as Mary. Mark also says the same as Matthew; but Luke gives the account not near the time of the Passover, but in the middle of the Gospel. Chrysostom explains it that there were two different women, one indeed who is described in John, another who is mentioned by the three.

Severus Antiochenus

AMBROSE. Matthew has introduced this woman as pouring ointment upon the head of Christ, and was therefore unwilling to call her a sinner, for the sinner, according to Luke, poured ointment upon the feet of Christ. She cannot then be the same, lest the Evangelists should seem to be at variance with one another. The difficulty may be also solved by the difference of merit and of time, so that the former woman may have been yet a sinner, the latter now more perfect. AUG. For I think we must understand that the same Mary did this twice, once indeed as Luke has related, when at first coming with humility and weeping, she was thought worthy to receive forgiveness of sins. Hence John, when he began to speak of the resurrection

Aug. de Cons. Ev. lib. ii. c. 79

of Lazarus, before he came to Bethany, says, *But it was* John 11, 2.
Mary who anointed our Lord with ointment, and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. Mary therefore had already done this; but what she again did in Bethany is another occurrence, which belongs not to the relation of Luke, but is equally told by the other three.

GREG. Now in a mystical sense the Pharisee, presuming Greg. in Hom. 33. in Evang upon his pretended righteousness, is the Jewish people; the woman who was a sinner, but who came and wept at our Lord's feet, represents the conversion of the Gentiles. AMBROSE. Or, the leper is the prince of this world; the house of Simon the leper is the earth. The Lord therefore descended from the higher parts to this earth; for this woman could not have been healed, who bears the figure of a soul or the Church, had not Christ come upon earth. But rightly does she receive the figure of a sinner, for Christ also took the form of a sinner. If then thou makest thy soul approach in faith to God, it, not with foul and shameful sins, but piously obeying the word of God, and in the confidence of unspotted purity, ascends to the very head of Christ. But the head of Christ is God. But let him who 1 Cor. 11, 3. holds not the head of Christ, hold the feet, the sinner at the feet, the just at the head; nevertheless she also who sinned, has ointment. GREG. What else is expressed by the oint- Greg. ubi sup. ment, but the sweet savour of a good report? If then we do good works by which we may sprinkle the Church with the sweet odour of a good report, what else do we but pour ointment upon the body of our Lord? But the woman stood by His feet, for we stood over against the feet of the Lord, when yet in our sins we resisted His ways. But if we are converted from our sins to true repentance, we now again stand by His feet, for we follow His footsteps whom we before opposed. AMBROSE. Bring thou also repentance after sin. Wherever thou hearest the name of Christ, speed thither; into whatever house thou knowest that Jesus has entered, thither hasten; when thou findest wisdom, when thou findest justice sitting in any inner chamber, run to its feet, that is, seek even the lowest part of wisdom; confess thy sins with tears. Perhaps Christ washed not His own feet, that we might wash them with our tears. Blessed

tears, which cannot only wash away our own sin, but also water the footsteps of the heavenly Word, that His goings may abound in us. Blessed tears, in which there is not only the redemption of sinners, but the refreshing of the righteous. Greg. Hom. 33. in Evan. GREG. For we water the feet of our Lord with tears if we are moved with compassion to any even the lowest members of our Lord. We wipe our Lord's feet with our hair, when we shew pity to His saints (with whom we suffer in love) by the sacrifice of those things with which we abound. AMBROSE. Throw about thy hair, scatter before Him all the graces of thy body. The hair is not to be despised which can wash the feet of Christ. Greg. ubi sup. GREG. The woman kisses the feet which she has wiped. This also we fully do when we ardently love those whom we maintain by our bounty. By the feet also may be understood the mystery itself of the Incarnation. We then kiss the feet of the Redeemer when we love with our whole heart the mystery of the Incarnation. We anoint the feet with ointment, when we proclaim the power of His humanity with the good tidings of holy eloquence. But this also the Pharisee sees and grudges, for when the Jewish people perceives that the Gentiles preach God, it consumes away by its own malice. But the Pharisee is thus repulsed, that as it were through Him that false people might be made manifest, for in truth that unbelieving people never offered to the Lord even those things which were without them; but the Gentiles being converted, poured forth not only their substance but their blood. Hence He says to the Pharisee, *Thou gavest Me no water for My feet, but she hath washed My feet with her tears;* for water is without us, the moisture of tears is within us. That unfaithful people also gave no kiss to the Lord, for it was unwilling to embrace Him from love whom it obeyed from fear, (for the kiss is the sign of love,) but the Gentiles being called cease not to kiss the feet of their Redeemer, for they ever breathe in His love. AMBROSE. But she is of no slight merit of whom it is said, *From the time that she entered has not ceased to kiss My feet,* so that she knew not to speak aught but wisdom, to love aught but justice, to touch aught but chastity, to kiss aught but modesty. Greg. ubi sup. GREG. But it is said to the Pharisee, *My head with oil thou didst*

not anoint, for the very power even of Divinity on which the Jewish people professed to believe, he neglects to celebrate with due praise. But she hath anointed My feet with ointment. For while the Gentile people believed the mystery of His incarnation, it proclaimed also His lowest powers with the highest praise.

AMBROSE. Blessed is he even who can anoint with oil the feet of Christ, but more blessed is he who anoints with ointment, for the essence of many flowers blended into one, scatters the sweets of various odours. And perhaps no other than the Church alone can bring that ointment which has innumerable flowers of different perfumes, and therefore no one can love so much as she who loves in many individuals. But in the Pharisee's house, that is, in the house of the Law and the Prophets, not the Pharisee, but the Church is justified. For the Pharisee believed not, the Church believed. The Law has no mystery by which secret faults are cleansed, and therefore that which is wanting in the Law is made up in the Gospel. But the two debtors are the two nations who are responsible for payment to the usurer of the heavenly treasury. But we do not owe to this usurer material money, but the balance of our good deeds, the coin of our virtues, the merits of which are estimated by the weight of sorrow, the stamp of righteousness, the sound of confession. But that denarius is of no slight value on which the image of the king is found. Woe to me if I shall not have what I received. Or because there is hardly any one who can pay the whole debt to the usurer, woe to me if I shall not seek the debt to be forgiven me. But what nation is it that owes most, if not we to whom most is lent? To them were entrusted the oracles of God, to us is entrusted the Virgin's offspring, Immanuel, i.e. God with us, the cross of our Lord, His death, His resurrection. It cannot then be doubted that he owes most who receives most. Among men he perhaps offends most who is most in debt. By the mercy of the Lord the case is reversed, so that he loves most who owes most, if so be that he obtains grace. And therefore since there is nothing which we can worthily return to the Lord, woe be to me also if I shall not have loved. Let us then offer our love for the debt, for he loves most to whom most is given.

CHAP. VIII.

1. And it came to pass afterward, that He went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with Him,

2. And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils,

3. And Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto Him of their substance.

Theophyl. He who descended from heaven, for our example and imitation, gives us a lesson not to be slothful in teaching. Hence it is said, *And it came to pass afterward, that He went, &c.* Greg. Naz. For He passes from place to place, that He may not only gain many, but may consecrate many places. He sleeps and labours, that He may sanctify sleep and labour. He weeps, that He may give a value to tears. He preaches heavenly things, that He may exalt His hearers. Tit. Bost. For He who descends from heaven to earth, brings tidings to them that dwell on earth of a heavenly kingdom. But who ought to preach the kingdom of heaven? Many prophets came, yet preached not the kingdom of heaven, for how could they pretend to speak of things which they perceived not? Isid. Peleus. Now this kingdom of God some think to be higher and better than the heavenly kingdom, but some think it to be one and the same in reality, but called by different names; at one time the kingdom of God from Him who reigneth, but at another the kingdom of heaven from the Angels and Saints, His subjects, who are said to be of heaven.

Greg. Orat. xxxvii. 2.

Isid. lib. iii. ep. 206.

BEDE. But like the eagle, enticing its young ones to fly, our Lord, step by step, raises up His disciples to heavenly things. He first of all teaches in the synagogues, and performs miracles. He next chooses twelve whom He names Apostles; He afterwards takes them alone with Him, as He preached throughout the cities and villages, as it follows, *And the twelve were with Him.* THEOPHYL. Not teaching or preaching, but to be instructed by Him. But lest it should seem that the women were hindered from following Christ, it is added, *And certain women which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils.* BEDE. Mary Magdalene is the same of whose repentance, without mention of her name, we have just read. For the Evangelist, when he relates her going with our Lord, rightly distinguishes her by her known name, but when describing the sinner but penitent, He speaks of her generally as a woman; lest the mark of her former guilt should blacken a name of so great report. Out of whom seven devils are reported to have gone, that it might be shewn that she was full of all vices. GREG. For what is understood by the seven devils, but all vices? For since all time is comprehended by seven days, rightly by the number seven is universality represented: Mary therefore had seven devils, for she was full of every kind of vice. It follows, *And Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others who ministered to Him of their substance.* JEROME. It was a Jewish custom, nor was it thought blameable, according to the ancient manners of that nation, that women should afford of their substance food and clothing to their teachers. This custom, as it might cause offence to the Gentiles, St. Paul relates he had cast off. But these ministered unto the Lord of their substance, that He might reap their carnal things from whom they had reaped spiritual things. Not that the Lord needed the food of His creatures, but that He might set an example to masters, that they ought to be content with food and clothing from their disciples. BEDE. But Mary is by interpretation, "bitter sea," because of the loud wailing of her penitence; Magdalene, "a tower, or rather belonging to a tower," from the tower of which it is said, *Thou art become my hope, my*

Greg. Hom. 33. in Ev.

Hier. in Matt. 27, 55.

1 Cor. 9, 15.

Ps. 61, 3.

strong tower from the face of my enemy. Joanna is by interpretation "the Lord her grace," or "the merciful Lord," for from Him cometh every thing that we live upon. But if Mary, cleansed from the corruption of her sins, points to the Church of the Gentiles, why does not Joanna represent the same Church formerly subject to the worship of idols?

For every evil spirit whilst he acts for the devil's kingdom, is as it were Herod's steward. Susanna is interpreted, "a lily," or its grace, because of the fragrance and whiteness of the heavenly life, and the golden heat of inward love.

4. And when much people were gathered together, and were come to Him out of every city, He spake by a parable:

5. A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side: and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it.

6. And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture.

7. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it.

8. And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold. And when He had said these things, He cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

9. And His disciples asked Him, saying, What might this parable be?

10. And He said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.

11. Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.

12. Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word

out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.

13. They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.

14. And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.

15. But that on the good ground are they which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.

THEOPHYL. That which David had foretold in the person of Christ, *I will open my mouth in parables*, the Lord here fulfils; as it is said, *And when much people were gathered together, and were come to Him out of every city, He spake by a parable.* But the Lord speaks by a parable, first indeed that He may make His hearers more attentive. For men were accustomed to exercise their minds on dark sayings, and to despise what was plain; and next, that the unworthy might not receive what was spoken mystically. Ps. 78, 2.

ORIGEN. And therefore it is significantly said, *When much people were gathered together, and were come to Him out of every city.* For not many but few there are who walk the strait road, and find the way which leadeth to life. Hence Matthew says, that He taught without the house by parables, but within the house explained the parable to His disciples. Matt. 13, 36.

EUSEBIUS. Now Christ most fitly puts forth His first parable to the multitude not only of those who then stood by, but of those also who were to come after them, inducing them to listen to His words, saying, *A sower went out to sow his seed.*

BEDE. The sower we can conceive to be none other but the Son of God, Who going forth from His Father's bosom whither no creature had attained, came into the world that John 18, 37.

Chrys. Hom. 44. in Matt. He might bear witness to the truth. CHRYS. Now His going, Who is every where, was not local, but through the vail of the flesh He approached us. But Christ fitly denominates His advent, His going forth. For we were aliens from God, and cast out as criminals, and rebels to the king, but He who wishes to reconcile man, going out to them, speaks to them without, until having become meet for the royal presence, He brings them within; so also did Christ. THEOPHYL. But He went out now, not to destroy the husbandmen, or to burn up the earth, but He went out to sow. For ofttimes the husbandman who sows, goes out for some other cause, not only to sow. EUSEBIUS. Some went out from the heavenly country and descended among men, not Heb. 1, 14. however to sow, for they were not sowers, but ministering spirits sent forth to minister. Moses also and the prophets after him did not plant in men the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but by keeping back the foolish from the error of iniquity, and the worship of idols, they tilled as it were the souls of men, and brought them into cultivation. But the only Sower of all, the Word of God, went out to sow the new seed of the Gospel, that is, the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. THEOPHYL. But the Son of God never ceases to sow in our hearts, for not only when teaching, but creating, He sows good seed in our hearts. TIT. BOST. But He went out to sow *His* seed, He receives not the word as borrowed, for He is by nature the Word of the living God. The seed is not then of Paul, or of John, but they have it because they have received it. Christ has His own seed, drawing forth His teaching from His own nature. Hence also the Jews John 7, 15. said, *How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?*

EUSEBIUS. He teaches therefore that there are two classes of those who received the seed; the first, of those who have been made worthy of the heavenly calling, but fall from grace through carelessness and sloth; but the second, of those who multiply the seed bearing good fruit. But according to Matthew he makes three divisions in each class. For those who corrupt the seed have not all the same manner of destruction, and those who bear fruit from it do not receive an equal abundance. He wisely sets forth the cases of those who lose the seed. For some though they have not

sinned, have lost the good seed implanted in their hearts, through its having been withdrawn from their thoughts and memory by evil spirits, and devils who fly through the air; or deceitful and cunning men, whom He calls the birds of the air. Hence it follows, *And as he sowed, some fell by the way side.* THEOPHYL. He said not that the sower threw some on the way side, but that *it fell by the way side.* For he who sows teaches the right word, but the word falls in different ways upon the hearers, so that some of them are called *the way side: and it was trodden down, and the birds of the air devoured it.* CYRIL. For every way side is in some measure dry and uncultivated, because it is trodden down by all men, and no seed gains moisture on it. So the divine warning reaches not the unteachable heart, that it should bring forth the praise of virtue. These then are the ways frequented by unclean spirits. There are again some who bear faith about them, as if it consisted in the nakedness of words; their faith is without root, of whom it is added, *And some fell upon a rock, and as soon as it sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture.* BEDE. The rock, He says, is the hard and unsubdued heart. Now the moisture at the root of the seed is the same as what is called in another parable, the oil to trim the lamps of the Matt. 25. virgins, that is, love and stedfastness in virtue. EUSEBIUS. There are also some who through covetousness, the desire of pleasure and worldly cares, which indeed Christ calls thorns, suffer the seed which has been sown in them to be choked. CHRYS. For as the thorns do not let the seed grow up, but Chrys. when it has been sown choke it by thickening round it, so Hom. 44. in Matt. the cares of this present life permit not the seed to bear fruit. But in things of sense the husbandman must be reproved who would sow amid thorns on a rock and the way side, for it is impossible that the rocks should become earth, the way not be a way, the thorns not be thorns. But in rational things it is otherwise. For it is possible that the rock should be converted into a fruitful soil, the way not be trodden down, the thorns dispersed. CYRIL. Now the rich and fruitful ground is the honest and good hearts which receive deeply the seeds of the word, and retain them and cherish them. And whatever is added to this, *And some*

fell upon good ground, and springing up, brought forth fruit an hundredfold. For when the divine word is poured into a soul free from all anxieties, then it strikes root deep, and sends forth as it were the ear, and in its due season comes to perfection. BEDE. For by fruit a hundredfold, He means perfect fruit. For the number ten is always taken to imply perfection, because in ten precepts is contained the keeping, or the observance of the law. But the number ten multiplied by itself amounts to a hundred; hence by a hundred very great perfection is signified. CYRIL. But what the meaning of the parable is, let us hear from Him who made it, as it follows, *And when He had said these things, He cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.* BASIL. Hearing has reference to the understanding. By this then our Lord stirs us up to listen attentively to the meaning of those things which are spoken. BEDE. For as often as the admonition occurs either in the Gospel or the Revelation of St. John, it signifies that there is a mystical meaning in what is said, and we must inquire more closely into it. Hence the disciples who were ignorant ask our Saviour, for it follows, *And His disciples asked Him, &c.* But let no one suppose that as soon as the parable was finished His disciples asked Him, but as Mark says, *When He was alone they asked Him.* ORIGEN. Now a parable is a narration of an action as done, yet not done according to the letter, though it might have been, representing certain things by means of others which are given in the parable. An enigma is a continued story of things which are spoken of as done, and yet have not been done, nor are possible to be done, but contains a concealed meaning, as that which is mentioned in the Book of Judges, that *the trees went forth to anoint a king over them.* But it was not literally a fact as is said, *A sower went out to sow,* like those facts related in history, yet it might have been so.

Basil. Hom. in Princ. Prov.

Mark 4, 10.

Origen. in Prov. 1.

Judges 9, 8.

EUSEBIUS. But our Lord told them the reason why He spake to the multitudes in parables, as follows, *And He said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of God.* GREG. NAZ. When you hear this you must not entertain the notion of different natures, as certain heretics do, who think that some men indeed are of a perishing nature, others

Greg. ubi sup.

of a saving nature, but that some are so constituted that their will leads them to better or worse. But add to the words, *To you it is given,* if willing and truly worthy. THEOPHYL. But to those who are unworthy of such mysteries, they are obscurely spoken. Hence it follows, *But to the rest in parables, that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.* For they think they see, but see not, and hear indeed, but do not understand. For this reason Christ hides this from them, lest they should beget a greater prejudice against them, if after they had known the mysteries of Christ, they despised them. For he who understands and afterwards despises, shall be more severely punished. BEDE. Rightly then do they hear in parables, who having closed the senses of their heart, care not to know the truth, forgetful of what the Lord told them. *He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.* GREG. But our Lord condescended to explain what He said, that we might know how to seek for explanation in those things which He is unwilling to explain through Himself. For it follows, *Now the parable is this: The seed is the Word of God.* EUSEB. Now He says, that there are three reasons why men destroy the seed implanted in their hearts. For some destroy the seed that is hid in them by lightly giving heed to those that wish to deceive, of whom He adds, *Those by the way side are they that hear: then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts.* BEDE. Who in truth deign to receive the word which they hear with no faith, with no understanding, at least with no attempt to test the value of it. EUSEB. But some there are who having not received the word in any depth of heart, are soon overcome when adversity assails them, of whom it is added, *They on the rock are they which when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.* CYRIL. For when they enter the Church they gladly wait on the Divine mysteries, but with infirmity of purpose. But when they leave the Church they forget the sacred discipline, and as long as Christians are undisturbed, their faith is lasting; but when persecution harasses, their heart fails them, for their faith was without root. GREG. Many men propose to begin a good work, but

Greg. in Hom. 15. in Ev

Greg. ubi sup.

as soon as they have become annoyed by adversity or temptation, they abandon what they had begun. The rocky ground then had no moisture to carry on to constancy fruit which it had put forth. EUSEB. But some choke the seed which has been deposited in them with riches and vain delights, as if with choking thorns, of whom it is added, *And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches of this life, &c.* GREG. It is wonderful that the Lord has represented riches as thorns, for these prick, while those delight, and yet they are thorns, for they lacerate the mind by the prickings of their thoughts, and whenever they entice to see they draw blood, as if inflicting a wound. But there are two things which He joins to riches, cares and pleasures, for they oppress the mind by anxiety and unnerve it by luxuries, but they choke the seed, for they strangle the throat of the heart with vexatious thoughts, and while they let not a good desire enter the heart, they close up as it were the passage of the vital breath.

Greg. ubi sup.

EUSEB. Now these things were foretold by our Saviour according to His foreknowledge, and that their case is so, experience testifies. For in no wise do men fall away from the truth of divine worship, but according to some of the causes before mentioned by Him. CHRYS. And to sum up many things in a few words. Some indeed as careless hearers, some as weak, but others as the very slaves of pleasure and worldly things, hold aloof from what is good. The order of the way side, the rock, and the thorns is well, for we have first need of recollection and caution, next of fortitude, and then of contempt of things present. He therefore places the good ground in opposition to the way, the rock, and the thorns. *But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, &c.* For they who are on the way side keep not the word, but the devil takes away their seed. But they who are on the rock sustain not patiently the assaults of temptation through weakness. But they who are among thorns bear no fruit, but are choked. GREG. The good ground then bears fruit through patience, for nothing we do is good unless we endure patiently our closest evils. They

Chrys. Hom. 44. in Matt.

Greg. ubi sup.

therefore bear fruit through patience, who when they bear strifes humbly, are after the scourge received with joy to a heavenly rest.

16. No man, when he hath lighted a candle, covereth it with a vessel, or putteth it under a bed; but setteth it on a candlestick, that they which enter in may see the light.

17. For nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest; neither any thing hid, that shall not be known and come abroad.

18. Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.

BEDE. Having before said to His Apostles, *Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to others in parables;* He now shews that by them at length must the same mystery be revealed also to others, saying, *No man when he hath lighted a candle covereth it with a vessel, or putteth it under a bed.* EUSEB. As if He said, As a lantern is lighted that it should give light, not that it should be covered under a bushel or a bed, so also the secrets of the kingdom of heaven when uttered in parables, although hid from those who are strangers to the faith, will not however to all men appear obscure. Hence He adds, *For nothing is secret that shall not be made manifest, neither any thing hid that shall not be known, and come abroad.* As if He said, Though many things are spoken in parables, that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand, because of their unbelief, yet the whole matter shall be revealed.

AUG. Or else in these words He typically sets forth the boldness of preaching, that no one should, through fear of fleshly ills, conceal the light of knowledge. For under the names of vessel and bed, He represents the flesh, but of that of lantern, the word, which whosoever keeps hid through fear of the troubles of the flesh, sets the flesh itself before

Aug. de Quæst. Ev. lib. ii. q. 12.

the manifestation of the truth, and by it he as it were covers the word, who fears to preach it. But he places a candle upon a candlestick who so submits his body to the service of God, that the preaching of the truth stands highest in his estimation, the service of the body lowest.

ORIGEN. But he who would adapt his lantern to the more perfect disciples of Christ, must persuade us by those things which were spoken of John, for he was a burning and a shining light. It becomes not him then who lights the light of reason in his soul to hide it under a bed where men sleep, nor under any vessel, for he who does this provides not for those who enter the house for whom the candle is prepared, but they must set it upon a candlestick, that is, the whole Church.

John 5,35.

Chrys. Hom. 15. in Matt.

CHRYS. By these words He leads them to diligence of life, teaching them to be strong as exposed to the view of all men, and fighting in the world as on a stage. As if He said, Think not that we dwell in a small part of the world, for ye will be known of all men, since it cannot be that so great virtue should lie hid. MAXIM. Or perhaps the Lord calls Himself a light shining to all who inhabit the house, that is, the world, since He is by nature God, but by the dispensation made flesh. And so like the light of the lamp He abides in the vessel of the flesh by means of the soul as the light in the vessel of the lamp by means of the flame. But by the candlestick He describes the Church over which the divine word shines, illuminating the house as it were by the rays of truth. But under the similitude of a vessel or bed He referred to the observance of the law, under which the word will not be contained. BEDE. But the Lord ceases not to teach us to hearken to His word, that we may be able both to constantly meditate on it in our own minds, and to bring it forth for the instruction of others. Hence it follows, *Take heed therefore how ye hear; for whosoever hath, to him shall be given.* As if He says, Give heed with all your mind to the word which ye hear, for to him who has a love of the word, shall be given also the sense of understanding what he loves; but whoso hath no love of hearing the word, though he deems himself skilful either from natural genius, or the exercise of learning, will have no delight

Max. Quæst. in Script. 63.

in the sweetness of wisdom; for oftentimes the slothful man is gifted with capacities, that if he neglect them he may be the more justly punished for his negligence, since that which he can obtain without labour he disdains to know, and sometimes the studious man is oppressed with slowness of apprehension, in order that the more he labours in his enquiries, the greater may be the recompense of his reward.

19. Then came to Him His mother and His brethren, and could not come at Him for the press.

20. And it was told Him by certain which said, Thy mother and Thy brethren stand without, desiring to see Thee.

21. And He answered and said unto them, My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it.

TIT. BOST. Our Lord had left His kinsfolk according to the flesh, and was occupied in His Father's teaching. But when they began to feel His absence, they came unto Him, as it is said, *Then came unto Him His mother and His brethren.* When you hear of our Lord's brethren you must include also the notions of piety and grace. For no one in regard of His divine nature is the brother of the Saviour, (for He is the Only-begotten,) but He has, by the grace of piety, made us partakers in His flesh and His Blood, and He who is by nature God has become our brother.

BEDE. But those who are said to be our Lord's brethren according to the flesh, you must not imagine to be the children of the blessed Mary, the mother of God, as Helvidius thinks, nor the children of Joseph by another wife, as some say, but rather believe to be their kinsfolk. TIT. BOST. His brethren thought that when He heard of their presence He would send away the people, from respect to His mother's name, and from His affection towards her, as it follows, *And it was told Him, Thy mother and Thy brethren stand without.* CHRYS. Think what it was, when the whole people stood by, and were hanging upon His mouth, (for His teaching had already begun,) to withdraw Him away from them. Our

Chrys. Hom. 44. in Matt.

Lord accordingly answers as it were rebuking them, as it follows, *And He answered and said unto them, My mother and My brethren are they which hear the word of God, and do it, &c.* AMBROSE. The moral teacher who gives himself an example to others, when about to enjoin upon others, that he who has not left father and mother, is not worthy of the Son of God, first submits Himself to this precept, not that He denies the claims of filial piety, (for it is His own sentence, He that knoweth not his father and mother shall die the death,) but because He knows that He is more bound to obey His Father's mysteries than the feelings of His mother. Nor however are His parents harshly rejected, but the bonds of the mind are shewn to be more sacred than those of the body. Therefore in this place He does not disown His mother, (as some heretics say, eagerly catching at His speech,) since she is also acknowledged from the cross; but the law of heavenly ordinances is preferred to earthly affection. BEDE. They then who hear the word of God and do it, are called the mother of our Lord, because they daily in their actions or words bring Him forth as it were in their inmost hearts; they also are His brethren where they do the will of His Father, who is in heaven.

Chrys. Hom. 41. in Matt.

CHRYS. Now He does not say this by way of reproof to His mother, but to greatly assist her, for if He was anxious for others to beget in them a just opinion of Himself, much more was He for His mother. And He had not raised her to such a height if she were always to expect to be honoured by Him as a son, and never to consider Him as her Lord. THEOPHYL. But some take this to mean that certain men, hating Christ's teaching, and mocking at Him for His doctrine, said, *Thy mother and Thy brethren stand without wishing to see Thee;* as if thereby to shew His meanness of birth. And He therefore knowing their hearts gave them this answer, that meanness of birth harms not, but if a man, though of low birth, hear the word of God, He reckons him as His kinsman. Because however hearing only saves no one, but rather condemns, He adds, *and doeth it;* for it becomes us both to hear and to do. But by the word of God He means His own teaching, for all the words which He Himself spake were from His Father.

Ambrose. In a mystical sense he ought not to stand without who was seeking Christ. Hence also that saying, *Come unto Him, and be enlightened.* For if they stand without, not even parents themselves are acknowledged; and perhaps for our example they are not. How are we acknowledged by Him if we stand without? That meaning also is not unreasonable, because by the figure of parents He points to the Jews of whom Christ was born, and thought the Church to be preferred to the synagogue. Bede. For they cannot enter within when He is teaching whose words they refuse to understand spiritually. But the multitude went before and entered into the house, because when the Jews rejected Christ the Gentiles flocked to Him. But those who stand without, wishing to see Christ, are they, who not seeking a spiritual sense in the law, have placed themselves without to guard the letter of it, and as it were rather compel Christ to go out, to teach them earthly things, than consent to enter in themselves to learn spiritual things.

Ps. 34, 6. Vulg.

Rom. 9, 5.

22. Now it came to pass on a certain day, that He went into a ship with His disciples: and He said unto them, Let us go over unto the other side of the lake. And they launched forth.

23. But as they sailed He fell asleep: and there came down a storm of wind on the lake; and they were filled with water, and were in jeopardy.

24. And they came to Him, and awoke Him, saying, Master, master, we perish. Then He arose, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was a calm.

25. And He said unto them, Where is your faith? And they being afraid wondered, saying one to another, What manner of man is this! for He commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey Him.

Cyril. When the disciples saw that all men received help from Christ, it seemed fitting that they themselves also

should in turn rejoice in the benefits of Christ. For no one regards that which happens in the person of another equally with that to himself. The Lord therefore exposed the disciples to the sea and the winds, as it follows, *Now it came to pass on a certain day that He went into a ship with His disciples; and He said unto them, Let us go over unto the other side of the lake: and they launched forth.* CHRYS. Luke indeed avoids the question which might be put to him with regard to the order of time, saying, that He went into a ship on a certain day. Now if the storm had arisen when our Lord was awake, the disciples either had not feared, or not believed that He could do such a thing. For this cause He sleeps, giving them an occasion for fear; for it follows, *But as they sailed He fell asleep; and there came down a storm of wind on the lake.* AMBROSE. We are told above, moreover, that He passed the night in prayer. How then does He here fall asleep in a storm? The security of power is expressed, that while all were afraid, He alone lay fearless; but He lay asleep in the body, while in the mind He was in the mystery of divinity. For nothing happens without the Word. CYRIL. But it seems to have been especially and wonderfully ordained that they should not seek His assistance when first the storm began to affect the boat, but after the danger had increased, in order that the power of the Divine Majesty might be made more manifest. Hence it is said, *And they were filled with water, and were in jeopardy.* This indeed our Lord allowed for the sake of trial, that having confessed their danger, they should acknowledge the greatness of the miracle. Hence when their great danger had driven them into intolerable fear, having no other hope of safety but the Lord of power Himself, they awoke Him. It follows, *And they came to Him, and awoke Him, saying, Master, we perish.* AUG. Matthew says, *Master, save us, we perish.* Mark, *Master, carest Thou not that we perish?* There is the same expression in all of men awakening our Lord, and anxious for their safety. Nor is it worth while to enquire which of these was most likely to have been said to Christ. For whether they said one of these three, or some other words which no Evangelist has mentioned, but of the same import, what matter is it? Though

Chrys. Hom. 27. in Matt.

Cyril. ubi sup.

Aug. de Cons. Ev. l. ii. c. 24.

at the same time this may have been the case, that by the many who awoke Him, all these things were said, one by one, and another by another.

CYRIL. But it could not be that they should perish while the Almighty was with them. Christ then arose, who has power over all things, and immediately quells the storm and the violence of the wind, and the tempest ceased, and there was a calm. Herein He shews Himself to be God, to whom it is said, *Thou rulest the raging of the sea; when the waves thereof arise, Thou stillest them.* So then as He sailed, our Lord manifested both natures in one and the same person, seeing that He who as man slept in the ship, as God by His word stilled the raging of the sea. CYRIL. But together with the raging of the waters, He quiets also the tumult of their souls, as it follows, *And He said unto them, Where is your faith?* By which word He shewed, that it is not so much the assault of temptation which causes fear, as faint-heartedness. For as gold is proved in the fire, so is faith in temptation. AUG. Now this is related by the other Evangelists in different words. For Matthew says, that Jesus said, *Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?* but Mark as follows, *Why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith?* i.e. that perfect faith like the grain of mustard seed. Mark then also says, *O ye of little faith;* but Luke, *Where is your faith?* And indeed all these may have been said, *Why are ye fearful? Where is your faith? O ye of little faith.* Hence one Evangelist relates one, another another.

Ps. 89, 10. Aug. de Con. Ev. ut sup. Matt. 8. Mark 4.

CYRIL. When the tempest was quelled at the command of Christ, the disciples in astonishment whispered one to the other, as it follows, *And they being afraid wondered, &c.* Now the disciples said not this as ignorant of Him, for they knew that He was God, and Jesus the Son of God. But they marvel at the exceeding vastness of His natural power, and the glory of His divinity, although He was like to us, and visible in the flesh. Hence they say, *Who is this?* that is, of what manner of man? how great, and with what great power and majesty? for it is a mighty work, a lordly command, no abject petition. BEDE. Or, it was not His disciples, but the sailors and others in the ship who wondered.

But allegorically, the sea or lake is the dark and bitter tide of the world, the ship is the wood of the cross, by help of which the faithful, having passed the waves of this world, reach the shore of a heavenly country. Ambrose. Our Lord therefore, who knew that He came upon earth for a divine mystery, having left His kinsfolk, went up into the ship. Bede. His disciples also, when summoned, enter in
Matt. 16, 24. with Him. Hence He says, *If any one will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.* While His disciples are sailing, that is, the faithful passing through this world, and meditating in their minds the rest of the world to come, and by the breath of the Holy Spirit, or also their own exertions, eagerly leaving behind them the unbelieving pride of the world, suddenly our Lord fell asleep, that is, the time of our Lord's passion was come, and the storm descended. For when our Lord entered the sleep of death upon the cross, the waves of persecution rose, stirred up by the breath of the devil, but while the patience of the Lord is not disturbed by the waves, the faint hearts of the disciples are shaken and tremble. They awoke our Lord lest they should perish while He slept, because having seen His death they wish for His resurrection, for if that were delayed they would perish for ever. He rises therefore and rebukes the wind, since by His sudden rising again
Heb. 2, 14. He put down the pride of the devil who had the power of death. But He makes the tempest of nature to cease, since by His resurrection He baffled the rage of the Jews, who plotted His death.

Ambrose. You must remember that no one can pass from the course of this life without temptations, for temptation is the trial of faith. We are therefore subject to the storms of spiritual wickedness, but as watchful sailors we must awake the Pilot, who does not obey but commands the winds, who although He now no longer sleeps in the sleep of His own body, yet let us beware, lest through the sleep of our bodies He is to us asleep and at rest. But they are rightly reproved who feared, when Christ was present: since he surely who clings to Him can in no wise perish.

Mark 16, 14. Bede. In like manner, when He appeared after His death to His disciples, He upbraided them with their unbelief,

and thus having calmed the swelling waves, He made plain to all the power of His divinity.

26. And they arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, which is over against Galilee.

27. And when He went forth to land, there met Him out of the city a certain man, which had devils long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs.

28. When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before Him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with Thee, Jesus, Thou Son of God most high? I beseech Thee, torment me not.

29. (For He had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For oftentimes it had caught him: and he was kept bound with chains and in fetters; and he brake the bands, and was driven of the devil into the wilderness.)

30. And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name? And he said, Legion, because many devils were entered into him.

31. And they besought Him that He would not command them to go out into the deep.

32. And there was there an herd of many swine feeding on the mountain: and they besought Him that He would suffer them to enter into them. And He suffered them.

33. Then went the devils out of the man, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked.

34. When they that fed them saw what was done, they fled, and went and told it in the city and in the country.

35. Then they went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus, and found the man, out of whom

the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid.

36. They also which saw it told them by what means he that was possessed of the devils was healed.

37. Then the whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about besought Him to depart from them: for they were taken with great fear: and He went up into the ship, and returned back again.

38. Now the man out of whom the devils were departed besought Him that he might be with Him: but Jesus sent him away, saying,

39. Return to thine own house, and shew how great things God hath done unto thee. And he went his way, and published throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done unto him.

Cyril. The Saviour, as He sailed with His disciples, came to a port, as it is said, *And they arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, which is over against Galilee.* Titus Bost. Many accurate copies have neither "Gerazenes" nor "Gadarenes," but "Gergezenes." For Gadara is a city in Judea, but neither lake nor sea is found at it; and Geraza is a city of Arabia, having neither lake nor sea near. But Gergeza, from which the Gergezenes are called, is an ancient city near the lake of Tiberias, above which is a rock hanging over the lake, into which they say the swine were dashed down by the devils. But since Gadara and Geraza border upon the land of the Gergezenes, it is probable that the swine were led from thence to their parts. Bede. For Geraza is a famous city of Arabia, on the other side of the Jordan, close to the mountain of Galaad, which was possessed by the tribe of Manasseh, and not far from the lake of Tiberias, into which the swine were cast headlong.

Chrys. Hom. 28. in Matt.

Chrys. But as soon as our Lord had departed from the sea, He meets with another more awful wonder. For the demoniac, like an evil slave, when he sees Him confirms his bondage, as it follows, *And when He went forth to land, there met Him out of the city a certain man, &c.* Aug

Aug. de Cons. Ev. ut sup.

Whereas Matthew says, that there were two possessed, but Mark and Luke mention only one; you must understand one of them to be a more distinguished and famous person, for whom that neighbourhood was chiefly distressed, and in whose restoration they were greatly interested. Wishing to signify this, the two Evangelists thought right to mention him alone, concerning whom the report of this miracle had been most extensively noised abroad. CHRYS. Or, Luke selected from the two the one who was most savage. Hence he gives the most melancholy account of his calamity, adding, *And he wore no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs.* But the evil spirits visit the tombs of the dead, to instil into men that dangerous notion that the souls of the dead become evil spirits. CYRIL. Now his going naked among the tombs of the dead was a mark of demoniacal wildness. But God permits some in His providence to become subject to evil spirits, that we may ascertain through them of what kind the evil spirits are towards us, in order that we may refuse to be made subject unto them, and so by the suffering of one many may be edified.

Chrys. Hom. 28. in Matt.

CHRYS. But because the people acknowledged Him to be man, the devils came publishing His divinity, which even the sea had proclaimed by its calmness. Hence it follows, *When he saw Jesus he fell down before Him, and with a loud voice said, &c.* CYRIL. Mark here the combination of fear with boldness and great desperation, for it is a sign of devilish despair to speak out boldly, *What have I to do with Thee, Jesus, Thou Son of God most high?* but of fear when they pray, *I beseech Thee not to cast me out.* But if thou knowest Him to be the Son of God most high, thou confessest Him to be the God of heaven and earth, and of all things that are contained in them. How then dost thou make use not of thy own but His words, saying, *What have I to do with Thee?* But what earthly prince will altogether endure to have his subjects tormented by barbarians? Hence it follows, *For He had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of him.* And He shews the necessity of the command, adding, *For oftentimes it had caught him, &c.* CHRYS. Therefore since no one could hold the possessed, Christ goes to him and addresses him. It follows, *And Jesus asked him, saying,*

Chrys. ubi sup.

Chrys. ubi sup.

What is thy name? BEDE. He enquires not his name as ignorant of it, but that when the demoniac had confessed the plague which he endured, the power of the Healer might shine forth more welcome to him. But the priests also of our time, who through the grace of exorcism are able to cast out devils, are wont to say that the sufferers can no otherwise be cured than by openly telling in confession every thing which either waking or sleeping they have endured from the unclean spirits, and above all when they imagine that the devils seek and obtain the possession of the human body. So also here the confession is added, *And he said, Legion, because many devils were entered into him.*

Greg. Hom. 14. in Cantic. Isaiah 14, 13. Chrys. ubi sup.

GREG. NYSS. Certain evil spirits imitating the heavenly hosts and the legions of Angels say that they are legions. As also their prince says that he will exalt his throne above the stars that he may be like to the Most High. CHRYS. But when the Lord had overcome the evil spirits which disturbed His creatures, they thought that because of the enormity of those things which had been done, He would not wait the time of their punishment, and therefore since they could not deny their guilt, they entreat that they may not quickly undergo the penalty. As it follows, *And they besought Him that He would not command them to go out into the deep.* THEOPHYL. Which indeed the devils demand, wishing yet longer to mix with mankind. CYRIL. And hence it is plain that the rebel hosts against the Divine Majesty were thrust down to hell by the unspeakable power of the Saviour. MAXIM. Now the Lord ordains for each class of sinners an appropriate punishment. The fire of Hell unquenchable for fleshly burnings, gnashing of teeth for wanton mirth, intolerable thirst for pleasure and revelry, the worm that dieth not for a crooked and malignant heart, everlasting darkness for ignorance and deceit, the bottomless pit for pride. Hence the deep is assigned to the devils as unto the proud; it follows, *And there was there an herd of swine, &c.* AUG. The words of Mark, that there was a herd of swine *nigh unto the mountains*, and of Luke, *on the mountains*, do not differ from one another. For the herd of swine was so large, that they might be part on the mountain, part near it. For there were two thou-

Max. Ep. ad Georgium.

Aug. de Con. Ev. l. ii. 24.

sand swine, as Mark has stated. AMBROSE. But the devils could not endure the clearness of the light of heaven, as those who have weak eyes cannot bear the sun's rays. CYRIL. The multitude of unclean spirits seek therefore to be sent into the herd of unclean swine, like to themselves, for it follows, *And they besought Him that He would suffer them to enter into them.* ATHAN. But if they have no power over swine, the evil spirits have much less against men who are made after the image of God. We ought then to fear God alone, but despise them. CYRIL. But the Lord granted them permission, that this might be among other things to us an occasion of benefit, and the confidence of our safety. It follows, *And He suffered them.* We must therefore consider that the evil spirits are hostile to those which are subject to them, and this will be evident from their sending down the swine violently into the waters and choking them; as it follows, *Then went the devils out of the man and entered into the swine, and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked.* And this Christ permitted to them which sought it, that it might appear from the event how cruel they are. It was also necessary to shew that the Son of God has no less power to foresee than the Father, that equal glory might be manifested in each.

Mark 5. 13.

Athan. de vita Anton.

TIT. BOST. But the shepherds take flight, lest they should perish with the swine. Hence it follows, *When they that fed them saw what was done they fled, and went and told it in the city and in the country,* and excited the like alarm among the citizens. But the severity of their loss led them to the Saviour; for it follows, *Then they went out to see what was done, and came to Jesus;* and here remark, that while God punishes men in their substance, He confers a blessing upon their souls. But when they had set out, they see him in his right mind who had been long vexed. It follows, *And they found the man out of whom the devils had departed sitting at the feet of Jesus clothed,* (whereas before he was naked,) *and in his right mind.* For he departed not from those feet, where he obtained safety; and so acknowledging the miracle, they were astonished at the cure of the malady, and marvelled at the event; for it follows, *And they were afraid.* But this thing they discover partly by sight, partly

Vide Victor. Ant. in Mark 5.

hearing it in words. It follows, *They also which saw it told them by what means he that was possessed of the devils was healed.* But they ought to have besought the Lord not to depart from them, but to be the guardian of their country, that no evil spirits might come near them; but through fear they lost their own salvation, asking the Saviour to depart. It follows, *Then the whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about besought Him to depart from them, for they were taken with great fear.* THEOPHYL. They feared lest they should again suffer some loss, as they had suffered in the drowning of the swine. CHRYS. But observe the humility of Christ; for when after conferring so great benefits upon them they sent Him away, He offers no obstacle, but departs, leaving those who had proclaimed themselves unworthy of His teaching. It follows, *And He went up into the ship, and returned back again.* TIT. BOST. But as He was departing, the man who had been afflicted will not part from his Saviour, for it follows, *Now the man out of whom the devils were departed besought Him that he might be with Him.* THEOPHYL. For as one who had been tried by experience, he feared, lest perhaps when far from Jesus he should again become the prey of evil spirits. But the Lord shews him, that though He is not present with him, He can protect by His grace, for it follows, *But Jesus sent him away, saying, Return to thine own house, and shew how great things God hath done for thee.* But He said not, "how great things I have done for thee," giving us an example of humility, that we should attribute all our righteousness to God. TIT. BOST. He does not however turn aside from the law of truth, for whatever the Son doth the Father doth. But why does He, who every where charged those who were delivered to tell no one, say to this man who was delivered from the legion, *Shew how great things God hath done for thee?* Because in truth that whole country knew not God, and was in bondage to the worship of devils. Or more truly, now that He refers the miracle to His Father, He says, *Shew how great, &c.* but when He speaks of Himself He charges to tell no one. But he who was healed of the evil spirits knew Jesus to be God, and therefore published what great things God had done for him.

Chrys. ubi sup.

For it follows, *And he went through the whole city, &c.* CHRYS. And so abandoning those who had proclaimed themselves unworthy of His teaching, He appoints as their teacher the man who had been released from the evil spirits. Chrys. ubi sup.

BEDE. Now mystically; Gerasa signifies the Gentile nations, whom after His passion and resurrection Christ visited in His preachers. Hence Gerasa or Gergesa, as some say, is by interpretation "casting out an inhabitant," that is, the devil by whom it was before possessed, or, "a stranger approaching," who before was afar off. AMBROSE. Now although the number of those healed by Christ is different in Luke and Matthew, yet the mystery is one and the same. For as he who had a devil is the figure of the Gentile people, the two also in like manner take the figure of the Gentiles. For whereas Noah begat three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japhet; the family of Shem only was called to the possession of God, and from the other two the people of different nations were descended. He (as Luke says) had devils long time, inasmuch as the Gentile people was vexed from the deluge down to our Lord's coming. But he was naked, because the Gentiles lost the garment of their nature and virtue. AUG. He abode in no house, that is, he had no rest in his conscience; he dwelt among the tombs, because he delighted in dead works in his sins. AMBROSE. Or what are the bodies of the unbelieving but kinds of tombs in which the word of God abides not? Aug. de Quæst. Ev. l. ii. q. 13.

AUG. Now that he was bound by brazen fetters and chains, signifies the harsh and severe laws of the Gentiles, by which also in their states offences are restrained. But, that having burst these chains he was driven by the evil spirit into the wilderness, means that having broken through these laws, he was also led by lust to those crimes which exceeded the ordinary life of men. By the expression that there was in him a legion of devils, the nations are signified who served many devils. But the fact that the devils were permitted to go into the swine, which fed on the mountains, signifies also the unclean and proud men over whom the evil spirits have dominion, because of their worship of idols, for the swine are they who, after the manner of unclean animals without speech and reason, have defiled the grace of Aug. ubi sup.

Aug. ubi sup. their natural virtues by the filthy actions of their life. AUG. But by their being sent down violently into the lake, it is meant that the Church has been purified, and now that the Gentiles are delivered from the dominion of evil spirits, those who refuse to believe in Christ, carry on their unholy rites in hidden places with dark and secret watchings. AMBROSE. They are carried violently down, for they are reclaimed not by the contemplation of any good deed, but thrust as from a higher place to a lower, along the downward path of iniquity, they perish amidst the waves of this world, shut out from the approach of air. For they who are carried to and fro by the rapid tide of pleasure cannot receive the communication of the Spirit; we see then that man himself is the author of his own misery. For unless a man lived like the swine, the devil would never have received power over him, or received it, not to destroy but to prove him. And perhaps the devil, who after the coming of our Lord can no longer steal away the good, seeks not the destruction of all men, but only the wanton, as the robber lies in wait not for armed men, but the unarmed. *When those who kept the herd saw this they fled.* For neither the teachers of philosophy nor the chief of the synagogue can bring a cure to perishing mankind. It is Christ alone who takes away the sins of the people. AUG. Or, by the herdsmen of the swine flying and telling these things, He represents certain rulers of the wicked, who though they evade the law of Christianity, yet proclaim it among the nations by their astonishment and wonder. But by the Gerasenes, when they knew what was done, asking Jesus to depart from them, for they were struck with great fear, he represents the multitude delighting in their old pleasures, honouring indeed, but unwilling to endure the Christian law, saying that they cannot fulfil it, while they still marvel at the faithful released from their former abandoned mode of life. AMBROSE. Or there seems to have been a kind of synagogue in the city of the Gerasenes who besought our Lord to depart, because they were seized with great fear. For the weak mind receives not the word of God, nor can it endure the burden of wisdom. And therefore He no longer troubled them, but ascends from the lower parts to

Aug. de Qu. Evan. l. ii. q. 13.

the higher, from the Synagogue to the Church, and returned across the lake. For no one passes from the Church to the Synagogue without endangering his salvation. But whoever desires to pass from the Synagogue to the Church, let him take up his cross that he may avoid the danger. AUG. But that he, now that he is healed, desires to be with Christ, and it is said to him, *Return to thy house, and tell what great things God has done for thee*, implies that each should understand, that after the remission of his sins he should return to a good conscience as to his home, and obey the Gospel for the salvation of others, in order that there he may rest with Christ, lest by too early wishing to be with Christ he neglect the ministry of preaching necessary for this redemption of his brethren.

Aug. ubi sup.

40. And it came to pass, that, when Jesus was returned, the people gladly received Him: for they were all waiting for Him.

41. And, behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue: and he fell down at Jesus' feet, and besought Him that He would come into his house:

42. For he had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying. But as He went the people thronged Him.

43. And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any,

44. Came behind Him, and touched the border of His garment: and immediately her issue of blood stanched.

45. And Jesus said, Who touched Me? When all denied, Peter and they that were with Him said, Master, the multitude throng Thee and press Thee, and sayest Thou, Who touched Me?

46. And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched Me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of Me.

47. And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling, and falling down before Him, she declared unto Him before all the people for what cause she had touched Him, and how she was healed immediately.

48. And He said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole: go in peace.

Aug. de Con. Ev. l. ii. c. 28. AUG. After relating the miracle of the Gadarenes, Luke goes on to relate that of the ruler of the synagogue's daughter, saying, *And it came to pass, that, when Jesus was returned, the people gladly received Him; for they were all waiting for Him.* THEOPHYL. At once both because of His teaching and His miracles. Aug. ubi sup. AUG. But the event which He adds, *And, behold, there came a man named Jairus,* must not be supposed to have taken place immediately, but first that of the feast of the publicans which Matthew mentions, Matt. 9, 18. to which he so joins on this that it cannot consequently be understood to have happened otherwise. Vide Victor. Ant. in Mark 5. TIT. BOST. The name is inserted for the sake of the Jews, who at that time well knew the event, that the name might be a demonstrative proof of the miracle. And there came not one of the lowest, but a ruler of the synagogue, that the mouths of the Jews might be the more closed. As it follows, *And he was a ruler of the synagogue.* Now he came to Christ because of his need; for grief sometimes urges us to do those things which are right, according to the Psalm, Ps. 32, 9. *Hold their mouths with bit and bridle, who come not nigh unto Thee.* THEOPHYL. Through urgent need then he fell at His feet, as it follows, *And he fell at Jesus' feet;* but it were right for him without a pressing necessity to fall at Christ's feet and acknowledge Him to be God. Chrys. Hom. 31. in Matt. CHRYS. But mark his dulness of heart, for it follows, *and besought Him that He would come into his house;* being ignorant in truth that He was able to heal when absent. For if he had known, he would have said as the centurion did, *Speak the word, and my daughter shall be healed.* Asterius. GREEK EX. But the cause of his coming is told by adding, *For he had only one daughter,* the

prop of his house, the succession of his race, *about twelve years old,* in the very flower of her age; *and she lay dying,* about to be carried to the grave instead of her nuptial bed. CHRYS. But the Lord had come not to judge the world, but to save it. Whereupon He does not weigh the rank of the petitioner, but calmly undertakes the work, knowing that what was to happen would be greater than what was asked. For He was called to heal the sick, but He knew that He would raise up one that was by this time dead, and implant on the earth a firm hope of the resurrection. Chrys. ubi sup.

AMBROSE. But when about to raise the dead, in order to bring faith to the ruler of the synagogue, He first cured the issue of blood. So also a temporal resurrection is celebrated at the Passion of our Lord, that the other might be believed to be eternal. *But as He went, the people thronged Him.* CYRIL. This was the greatest sign that He had really put on our flesh, and trampled under foot all pride. For they followed Him not afar off, but thronged Him. v. Chrys. 31. in Matt.

GREEK EX. Now a certain woman afflicted with a severe disease, whose infirmity had consumed her body, but physicians all her substance, finds her only hope in such great humbleness that she falls down before our Lord; of whom it follows, *And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, &c.* TIT. BOST. Of how great praise then is this woman worthy, who with her bodily powers exhausted by the continual issue of blood, and with so great a crowd thronging around Him, in the strength of her affection and faith entered the crowd, and coming behind, secretly touched the hem of his garment. CYRIL. For it was not lawful for the unclean either to touch any of the holy saints, or come near a holy man. CHRYS. For by the custom of the Law a malady of this kind was accounted a great uncleanness. Independently of this also, she had not yet a right estimation of Him, else she would not have thought to remain concealed, but nevertheless she came trusting to be healed. THEOPHYL. But as when a man turns his eye to a shining light, or puts fuel to the fire, immediately they have their effects; so indeed he who brings faith to Him who is able to cure, immediately obtains his cure; as it is said, *and immediately her issue of blood stanched.* CHRYS. But not the ubi sup. non occ. Chrys. Hom. 31. in Matt. Lev. 15, 19—25.

garments alone saved her, (for the soldiers also allotted them among themselves,) but the earnestness of her faith. THEOPHYL. For she believed, and was saved, and as was fitting first touched Christ with her mind, then with her body.

Asterius. GREEK Ex. But the Lord heard the woman's silent thoughts, and silently released her silent, permitting willingly the seizing of her cure. But afterwards He makes known the miracle, as it follows: *And Jesus said, Who touched Me?* CYRIL. For the miracle which was performed escaped not the Lord, but He who knew all things asks as if He were

Victor. Ant. ignorant. GREEK Ex. Now His disciples who knew not what was asked, but supposed He spoke merely of one touching Him, answer our Lord's question, as follows, *When all denied, Peter and they that were with him said, Master, the multitude press Thee and throng Thee, and sayest Thou, Who touched Me?* Our Lord therefore distinguishes the touching by His answer, as it follows, *And Jesus said, Somebody has touched Me:* as He said also, *He that hath ears to hear, let him hear,* although all had bodily hearing of this kind; but it is not truly hearing if a man hear carelessly, nor truly touching if he touch unfaithfully. He now therefore publishes what was done, as it is added, *For I perceive that virtue is gone out of Me.* He answers rather materially, in consideration of the minds of His hearers. He is here, however, manifested to us to be the true God, both by His miraculous deed, and by His word. For it is beyond us, and perhaps beyond angels also, to be able to communicate virtue as from our own nature. This belongs to the Supreme Nature alone. For nothing created possesses the power of healing, or even of doing any other like miracles, except it be divinely given. But it was not from desire of glory that He suffered not to remain concealed the exhibition of His divine power, Who had so often charged silence about His miracles, but because He looked to their advan-

Chrys. ubi sup. tage who are called through faith to grace. CHRYS. For first He removes the woman's fear, lest she should suffer the pangs of conscience, for as it were stealing the grace. Next He reproves her for thinking to lie concealed. Thirdly, He makes known her faults publicly for the sake of others, and betrays no less a miracle than the stanching of blood, by

shewing that all things are open to His sight. CYRIL. Moreover, He persuaded the ruler of the synagogue to believe undoubtingly that He would rescue his daughter from the hands of death. CHRYS. Now our Lord did not immediately discover her, for this reason, that by shewing that all things are known to Him, He might make the woman publish what was done, that the miracle might be free from all suspicion. Hence it follows, *And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling.* ORIGEN. But the same cure which the woman obtained by touching Him, our Saviour confirmed by His word; as it follows, *And He said unto her, Thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace,* that is, Be released from thy scourge. And indeed He first heals her soul by faith, then truly her body. TIT. BOST. He calls her daughter, as already healed because of her faith, for faith claims the grace of adoption.

Chrys. ubi sup.

non occ.

EUSEB. Now they say that the woman set up in Paneas (Cæsarea Philippi, whence she came) a noble triumphal monument of the mercy vouchsafed to her by the Saviour. For there stood upon a lofty pedestal near the entrance to her house a brazen statue of a woman on bended knees, and with her hands joined as if in prayer; opposite to which was erected another statue like to a man, made of the same material, clothed in a stole, and holding forth his hand to the woman. At his feet upon the base itself a strange kind of plant was growing, which reaching to the hem of the brazen stole, was said to be the cure of all diseases. And they said that this statue represents Christ. It was destroyed by Maximinus.

Euseb. Eccles. Hist. l. vii. c. 18.

διπλοΐς.

AMBROSE. Now mystically Christ had left the synagogue in Gerasa, and Him whom His own received not we strangers receive. BEDE. Or at the end of the world the Lord is about to return to the Jews, and to be gladly received by them through confession of the faith. AMBROSE. But whom do we suppose the chief of the synagogue to be, but the Law, from consideration of which our Lord had not entirely abandoned the synagogue. BEDE. Or, by the ruler of the synagogue is understood Moses. Hence he is rightly called

[a] διπλοΐς seems to mean here the στολὴ ἱερατικὴ, used by the Jewish Kings and Priests, but especially the High Priest. See Joseph Orat. vi. 14.

Jairus, that is, "enlightening" or "enlightened," as he who receives the words of life to give to us, thereby both enlightens others, and is himself also enlightened by the Holy Spirit. But the ruler of the synagogue fell at the feet of Jesus, because the lawgiver with the whole race of the patriarchs knew that Christ, appearing in the flesh, would be far preferred to them. For if the head of Christ is God, His feet must agreeably to this be taken for the Incarnation, by which He touched the earth of our mortality. The ruler asked Him to enter into his house, because he was desirous to behold His coming. His only daughter is the Synagogue, which alone was framed with a legal institution; which at twelve years of age, that is, when the time of puberty was approaching, lay dying; for having been brought up nobly by the prophets, as soon as it came to years of discretion, when it ought to bring forth spiritual fruits to God, being suddenly subdued through its weakness and error, it forgot to enter the way of spiritual life, and unless Christ had come to its help, would have fallen away into destruction. But the Lord going to heal the girl is thronged by the crowd, because giving wholesome warnings to the Jewish nation, He was borne down by the customs of a carnal people. AMBROSE. But while the Word of God hastens to this daughter of the ruler that He might save the children of Israel, the holy Church collected from among the Gentiles which was perishing by its falling away into gross crimes, seized first by faith the health prepared for others. BEDE. Now the issue of blood may be taken in two ways, that is, both for the prostitution of idolatry, and for those things which are done for the delights of the flesh and blood. AMBROSE. But what means it that this daughter of the ruler was dying at twelve years, and the woman was afflicted with the issue of blood for twelve years, but that it might be understood that as long as the Synagogue flourished the Church was weak. For almost in the same age of the world, the Synagogue began to grow up among the patriarchs, and idolatry to pollute the Gentile nation.

1 Cor. 11, 3.

AMBROSE. But as she had spent all her substance upon physicians, so the Gentile nations had lost all the gifts of nature. BEDE. Now by physicians understand either false

doctors, or philosophers and teachers of secular laws, who disputing much concerning virtue and vice, promised that they would give to mortals useful instructions for life; or suppose that by the physicians are signified the unclean spirits themselves, who by giving as it were advice to men, procure themselves to be worshipped as God, on listening to whom the Gentiles the more they consumed the strength of their natural industry, so much the less were they able to be cured from the pollution of their iniquity. AMBROSE. Now hearing that the people of the Jews were sick, she begins to hope for the remedy of their salvation; she knew that the time was arrived when a Physician should come from heaven, she rose to meet Him, more ready from faith, more backward from modesty. For this is the part of modesty and faith, to acknowledge weakness, not to despair of pardon. From modesty then she touched the hem of His garment; in faith she came, in piety believed, in wisdom knew herself to be healed; so the holy people of the Gentiles which believed God, blushed at its sins so as to desert them, offered its faith in believing, shewed its devotion in asking, put on wisdom in itself feeling its own cure, assumed boldness to confess that it had forestalled what was not its own. Now Christ is touched behind, as it is written, *Thou shalt walk after the Lord thy God.* BEDE. And He Himself says, *If any man serve Me, let him follow Me.* Or, because not seeing Christ present in the flesh, now that the sacraments of the temporary dispensation were completed, the Church began to follow His footsteps through faith.

Deut. 13, 4. John 13, 26

GREG. But while the crowd thronged Him, one woman touched our Redeemer, because all carnal men in the Church oppress Him from whom they are afar off, and they alone touch Him who are joined to Him in humility. The crowd therefore press Him and touch Him not, because it is both importunate in presence, and absent in life. BEDE. Or one believing woman touches the Lord, since Christ who is afflicted beyond measure by the diverse heresies multiplying around Him, is faithfully sought by the heart alone of the Catholic Church. AMBROSE. For they believe not who throng Him; they believe who touch. By faith Christ is touched, by faith He is seen. Lastly, to express the faith of her who touched Him, He says, *I know that virtue is gone out of Me,* which is

Greg. Mor. 3. c. 11. Job 2.

a more palpable sign, that the Divine Nature is not confined within the possibility of man's condition, and the compass of the human body, but eternal virtue overflows beyond the bounds of our mediocrity. For the Gentile people is not released by man's aid, but the gathering of nations is the gift of God, which even by its little faith turns to itself the everlasting mercy. For if we think what our faith is, and understand how great the Son of God is, we see that in comparison of Him we touch only the hem, we cannot reach the upper parts of the garment. If then we also wish to be cured, let us touch by faith the hem of Christ. But he who has touched Him is not hidden. Happy the man who has touched the extreme part of the Word. For who can comprehend the whole?

49. While he yet spake, there cometh one from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying to him, Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master.

50. But when Jesus heard it, He answered him, saying, Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole.

51. And when He came into the house, He suffered no man to go in, save Peter, and James, and John, and the father and the mother of the maiden.

52. And all wept, and bewailed her: but He said, Weep not; she is not dead, but sleepeth.

53. And they laughed Him to scorn, knowing that she was dead.

54. And He put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise.

55. And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway: and He commanded to give her meat.

56. And her parents were astonished: but He charged them that they should tell no man what was done.

Chrys. Hom. 31. in Matt.

Chrys. Our Lord conveniently waited until the death of the girl, that the miracle of her resurrection might be made public. For which reason also He goes slower, and speaks

longer with the woman, that the daughter of the ruler of the synagogue may expire, and messengers come to tell Him. As it is said, *While he yet spake, there cometh one from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying unto him, Thy daughter is dead.* AUG. But since Matthew states the ruler of the synagogue to have told our Lord that his daughter was not on the point of death but quite dead, and Luke and Mark say, that she was not yet dead, nay, even go so far as to say that there came some afterwards, who told her death; we must examine, lest they should seem to be at variance. And we must understand that for the sake of brevity, Matthew chose rather to say, that our Lord was asked to do what it is obvious He did, namely, to raise the dead. For our Lord needs not the words of the father concerning his daughter, but what is more important, his wishes. Certainly, if the other two or any one of them had mentioned that the father had said what those who came from the house said, that Jesus need not be troubled because the maid was dead, his words which Matthew has related would seem to be at variance with his thoughts. But now to those who brought that message, and said that the Master need not come, it is not said that the father assented. The Lord therefore did not blame him as distrustful, but the more strongly confirms his belief. As it follows, *But when Jesus heard it, He answered the father of the girl, Believe only, &c.* ATHAN. Our Lord requires faith from those who invoke Him, not because He needs the assistance of others, (for He is both the Lord and Giver of faith,) but not to seem to bestow His gifts according to His acceptance of persons, He shews that He favours those who believe, lest they should receive benefits without faith, and lose them by unbelief. For when He bestows a favour, He wishes it to last, and when He heals, the cure to remain undisturbed. THEOPHYL. When He was about to raise the dead He put all out, as teaching us to be free from vain-glory, and to do nothing for show, for when any one ought to perform miracles, he must not be in the midst of a great many, but alone and apart from the other. As it follows, *And when He came into the house, He suffered no man to go in, save Peter, and James, and John.* Now these only He permitted to enter as the Heads of His disciples, and able to conceal the miracle. For He did not

Aug. de Con. Ev. l. ii. c. 28.

Athan. Orat. in Pass. et Crucem. Dom. 4.

wish to be revealed to many before His time, perhaps on account of the envy of the Jews. So also when any one envies us, we ought not to make known to him our righteousness, lest we give him an occasion of greater envy. CHRYS. But He took not with Him His other disciples, so provoking them to a strange desire, because also they were not yet fully prepared, but He took Peter, and with him the sons of Zebedee, that the others also might imitate them. He took also the parents as witnesses, lest any should say the evidence of the resurrection was false. Luke adds to this also, that He shut out from the house those that were weeping, and shewed that they were unworthy of a sight of this kind. For it follows, *And they all wept and bewailed her.* But if He then shut them out, much more now. For then it had not yet been revealed that death was turned into sleep. Let no one then hereafter despise himself, bringing an insult to the victory of Christ, whereby He has overcome death, and turned it into sleep. In proof of which it is added, *But He said, Weep not; she is not dead, but sleepeth, &c.*, shewing that all things were at His command, and that He would bring her to life as if He were awakening her from sleep. They yet nevertheless laughed Him to scorn. For it follows, *And they laughed Him to scorn.* He did not reprove them nor put an end to their laughter, that laughter also might be a sign of death. For since generally, after a miracle has been performed men continue unfaithful, He takes them by their own words. But that He might by sight dispose to the belief of the resurrection, He takes the hand of the maid. As it follows, *But He took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise.* And when He had taken her by the hand, He awoke her. As it follows, *And her spirit returned, and she arose straightway.* For He poured not into her another soul, but restored the same which she had breathed forth. Nor does He only awake the maid, but orders her to take food. For it follows, *And He commanded to give her meat.* That it might not seem like a vision what was done. Nor did He Himself give to her, but He commanded others to do it. As also He said in the case of Lazarus, *Loose him.* And afterwards He made him partake of meat with Him.

Chrys. ubi sup.

John 11, 44

Severus. GREEK EX. He next charges the parents, astonished at the miracle, and almost crying out, not to publish abroad

what was done. As it follows, *And her parents were astonished; but He charged them that they should tell no man what was done;* shewing that He is the Giver of good things, but not covetous of glory, and that He gives the whole, receiving nothing. But he who seeks after the glory of his works has indeed shewn forth something, but receives something. BEDE. But mystically, when the woman was cured of the issue of blood, word is brought that the daughter of the ruler of the synagogue is dead; because while the Church was cleansed from the stain of its sins, the Synagogue was forthwith destroyed by unbelief and envy; by unbelief indeed, in that it refused to believe in Christ; by envy, in that it was grieved that the Church had believed. AMBROSE. But still also were the servants of the ruler incredulous with regard to the resurrection, which Jesus had foretold in the Law, fulfilled in the Gospel; therefore say they, *Do not trouble Him;* as if it were impossible for Him to raise the dead. Ps. 16. BEDE. Or this is even to this day said by those who see the state of the synagogue so destitute that they do not believe it can be restored, and therefore think nothing of praying for its resurrection. But those things which are impossible with men are possible with God. Therefore said the Lord to him, *Fear not, only believe, and she shall be made whole.* Luke 18, 27. The father of the girl is taken for the assembly of the doctors of the Law, which if it were willing to believe, the Synagogue also which is subject to it will be safe. AMBROSE. Therefore having entered into the house, He called a few to be judges of the coming resurrection: for the resurrection was not soon believed by the many. What then was the cause of this great difference? In a former case the widow's son is raised up before all, here a few only are set apart to judge. But I think that herein the mercy of the Lord is shewn, since the widowed mother of an only son suffered no delay. There is also the token of wisdom, that in the widow's son we should see the Church quick in believing; in the ruler of the synagogue's daughter, the Jews about indeed to believe, but out of a great many only a few. Lastly, when our Lord says, *She is not dead, but sleepeth,* they laughed Him to scorn. For whoever believes not, laughs. Let them therefore mourn their dead who think they are dead. Where there is a belief of the resurrection,

the notion is not of death but of rest. BEDE. The Synagogue also, because it has lost the joy of the Bridegroom, whereby alone it can live, lying dead as it were among those that mourn, understands not even the reason why it weeps.

AMBROSE. Now the Lord taking hold of the hand of the maid, cured her. Blessed is he whom wisdom takes by the hand, that she may bring him into her secret plaees, and command to be given him to eat. For the bread of heaven is the word of God. Hence comes also that wisdom which has filled its altars with the food of the body and blood of
Prov. 9, 5. God. *Come, she says, eat my bread, and drink the wine which I have mixed for you.* BEDE. Now the maid arose straightway, because when Christ strengthens the hand, man revives from the death of the soul. For there are some, who only by the secret thought of sin are conscious of bringing death to themselves. The Lord signifying that such He brings to life again, raised the daughter of the ruler of the synagogue. But others, by committing the very evil in which they delight, carry their dead as it were without the gates, and to shew that He raises these, He raised the widow's son without the gates. But some also, by habits of sin, bury themselves, as it were, and become corrupt; and to raise these also the grace of the Saviour is not wanting; to intimate which He raised from the dead Lazarus, who had been four days in the grave. But the deeper the death of the soul, so much the more intense should be the fervour of penitence. Hence He raises with a gentle voice the maid who lay dead in the room, the youth who was carried out He strengthens with many words, but to raise him who had been dead four days, He groaned in His spirit, He poured forth tears, and cried with a loud voice. But here also we must observe, that a public calamity needs a public remedy. Slight offences seek to be blotted out by secret penitence. The maid lying in the house rises again with few witnesses; the youth without the house is raised in the presence of a great crowd who accompanied Him. Lazarus summoned from the tomb was known to many nations.

CHAP. IX.

1. Then He called His twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases.

2. And He sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick.

3. And He said unto them, Take nothing for your journey, neither staves, nor scrip, neither bread, neither money; neither have two coats apiece.

4. And whatsoever house ye enter into, there abide, and thence depart.

5. And whosoever will not receive you, when ye go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony against them.

6. And they departed, and went through the towns, preaching the Gospel and healing every where.

CYRIL. It was fitting that those who were appointed the ministers of holy teaching should be able to work miracles, and by these very acts themselves be believed to be the ministers of God. Hence it is said, *Then called He His twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils.* Herein He brings down the haughty pride of the devil, who once said, *There is none who shall open* Isai. 10,
his mouth against me. EUSEB. And that through them the 14. LXX.
whole race of mankind may be sought out, He not only gives them power to drive away evil spirits, but to cure all kind of diseases at His command; as it follows, *And to cure diseases.* CYRIL. Mark here the divine power of the Son, Cyril. in
which belongs not to a fleshly nature. For it was in the Thesaur. l. 12. c. 14.

power of the saints to perform miracles not by nature, but by participation of the Holy Spirit; but it was altogether out of their power to grant this authority to others. For how could created natures possess dominion over the gifts of the Spirit? But our Lord Jesus Christ, as by nature God, imparts graces of this kind to whomsoever He will, not invoking upon them a power which is not His own, but infusing it into them from Himself. CHRYS. But after that they had been sufficiently strengthened by His guidance, and had received competent proofs of His power, He sends them out, as it follows, *And He sent them to preach the kingdom of God.* And here we must remark, that they are not commissioned to speak of sensible things as Moses and the Prophets; for they promised a land and earthly goods, but these a kingdom, and whatsoever is contained in it. GREG. NAZ. Now in sending His disciples to preach, our Lord enjoined many things on them, the chief of which are, that they should be so virtuous, so constant, so temperate, and, to speak briefly, so heavenly, that no less through their manner of living than their words, the teaching of the Gospel might be spread abroad. And therefore were they sent with lack of money, and staves, and a single garment; He accordingly adds, *And He said to them, Take nothing in the way, neither staves.* CHRYS. Many things indeed He ordained hereby; first indeed it rendered the disciples unsuspected; secondly, it held them aloof from all care, so that they might give their whole study to the word; thirdly, it taught them their own proper virtue. But perhaps, some one will say that the other things indeed are reasonable, but for what reason did He command them to have no scrip on their way, nor two coats, nor staff? In truth, because He wished to rouse them to all diligence, taking them away from all the cares of this life, that they might be occupied by the one single care of teaching. EUSEB. Wishing then that they should be free from the desire of wealth and the anxieties of life, He gave this injunction. He took it as a proof of their faith and courage, that when it was commanded them to lead a life of extreme poverty, they would not escape from what was ordered. For it was fitting that they should make a kind of bargain, receiving these saving

Chrys. Hom. 22. in Matt.

Greg. Orat. ii. 69.

Chrys. ubi sup.

virtues to recompense them for obedience to commands. And when He was making them soldiers of God, He girds them for battle against their enemies, by telling them to embrace poverty. For no soldier of God entangles himself in the affairs of a secular life. AMBROSE. Of what kind 2 Tim. 2, 4.
then he ought to be who preaches the Gospel of the kingdom of God is marked out by these Gospel precepts; that is, he must not require the supports of secular aid; and clinging wholly to faith, he must believe that the less he requires those things, the more they will be supplied to him. THEOPHYL. For He sends them out as very beggars, so that He would have them neither carry bread, nor any thing else of which men are generally in want. AUG. Or, the Lord did not Aug. de Con. l. ii. c. 30.
wish the disciples to possess and carry with them these things, not that they were not necessary to the support of this life, but because He sent them thus to shew that these things were due to them from those believers to whom they announced the Gospel, that so they might neither possess security, nor carry about with them the necessaries of this life, either great or little. He has therefore, according to Mark, excluded all except a staff, shewing that the faithful owe every thing to their ministers who require no superfluities. But this permission of the staff He has mentioned by name, when He says, *They should take nothing in the way, but a staff only.* AMBROSE. To those also who wish it, this place admits of being explained, so as to seem only to represent a spiritual temper of mind, which appears to have cast off as it were a certain covering of the body; not only rejecting power and despising wealth, but renouncing also the delights of the flesh itself. THEOPHYL. Some also understand by the Apostles not carrying scrip, nor staff, nor two coats, that they must not lay up treasures, (which a scrip implies, collecting many things,) nor be angry and of a quarrelsome spirit, (which the staff signifies,) nor be false and of a double heart, (which is meant by the two coats.) CYRIL. But it may be said, How then shall neces- Cyril. ut sup.
sary things be prepared for them? He therefore adds, *And into whatsoever house ye enter, there abide, and thence depart.* As if He said, Let the food of disciples suffice you, who receiving from you spiritual things, will minister unto you

temporal. But He ordered them to abide in one house, so as neither to incommode the host, (that is, so as to send him away,) nor themselves to incur the suspicion of gluttony and wantonness. AMBROSE. He pronounces it to be foreign to the character of a preacher of the heavenly kingdom to run from house to house and change the rights of inviolable hospitality; but as the grace of hospitality is supposed to be offered, so also if they are not received the dust must be shaken off, and they are commanded to depart from the city; as it follows, *And whosoever will not receive you when ye go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony, &c.* BEDE. The dust is shaken off from the Apostles' feet as a testimony of their labours, that they entered into a city, and the apostolical preaching had reached to the inhabitants thereof. Or the dust is shaken off when they receive nothing (not even of the necessaries of life) from those who despised the Gospel. CYRIL. For it is very improbable that those who despise the saving Word, and the Master of the household, will shew themselves kind to His servants, and seek further blessings. AMBROSE. Or it is a great return of hospitality which is here taught, i.e. that we should not only wish peace to our hosts, but also if any faults of earthly infirmity obscure them, they should be removed by receiving the footsteps of apostolical preaching. BEDE. But if any by treacherous negligence, or even from zeal, despise the word of God, their communion must be shunned, the dust of the feet must be shaken off, lest by their vain deeds which are to be compared to the dust, the footstep of a chaste mind be defiled. EUSEB. But when the Lord had girded His disciples as soldiers of God with divine virtue and wise admonitions, sending them to the Jews as teachers and physicians, they afterwards went forth, as it follows, *And they departed, and went through the towns preaching the gospel, and healing every where.*

Cyril. ubi sup.

7. Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was done by Him; and he was perplexed, because that it was said of some, that John was risen from the dead;

8. And of some, that Elias had appeared; and of others, that one of the old prophets was risen again.

9. And Herod said, John have I beheaded: but who is this, of whom I hear such things? And he desired to see Him.

CHRYS. It was not till a long time had passed that Herod took notice of the things that were done by Jesus, (to shew you the pride of a tyrant,) for he did not acknowledge them at first, as it is said, *Now Herod heard, &c.* THEOPHYL. Herod was the son of Herod the Great who slew the children, who was king, but this Herod was tetrarch. He enquired about Christ, who He was. Hence it follows, *And he was perplexed.* CHRYS. For sinners fear both when they know, and when they are ignorant; they are afraid of shadows, are suspicious about every thing, and are alarmed at the slightest noise. Such in truth is sin; when no one blames or finds fault, it betrays a man, when no one accuses it condemns, and makes the offender timid and backward. But the cause of fear is stated afterwards, in the words, *Because that it was said of some.* THEOPHYL. For the Jews expected a resurrection of the dead to a fleshly life, eating and drinking, but those that rise again will not be concerned with the deeds of the flesh. CHRYS. When Herod then heard of the miracles which Jesus was performing, he says, *John have I beheaded,* which was not an expression of boasting, but by way of allaying his fears, and bringing his distracted soul to recollect that he had killed. And because he had beheaded John, he adds, *but who is this?* THEOPHYL. If John is alive and has risen from the dead, I shall know him when I see him; as it follows, *And he sought to see Him.* AUG. Now Luke, though he keeps the same order in his narrative with Mark, does not oblige us to believe that the course of events was the same. In these words, too, Mark testifies only to the fact that others (not Herod) said that John had risen from the dead, but since Luke has mentioned Herod's perplexity, we must suppose either that after that perplexity, he confirmed in his own mind what was said by others, since he says to his servants, (as Matthew relates,) *This is John the Baptist, he is risen from the dead,* or these words of Matthew must have been altered so as to signify that he was still doubting.

Chrys. Hom. 48. in Matt.

Chrys. ubi sup.

Aug. de Con. Ev. l. ii. c. 45.

10. And the apostles, when they were returned, told Him all that they had done. And He took them, and went aside privately into a desert place belonging to the city called Bethsaida.

11. And the people, when they knew it, followed Him: and He received them, and spake unto them of the kingdom of God, and healed them that had need of healing.

12. And when the day began to wear away, then came the twelve, and said unto Him, Send the multitude away, that they may go into the towns and country round about, and lodge, and get victuals: for we are here in a desert place.

13. But He said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they said, We have no more but five loaves and two fishes; except we should go and buy meat for all this people.

14. For they were about five thousand men. And He said to His disciples, Make them sit down by fifties in a company.

15. And they did so, and made them all sit down.

16. Then He took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, He blessed them, and brake, and gave to the disciples to set before the multitude.

17. And they did eat, and were all filled: and there was taken up of fragments that remained to them twelve baskets.

Aug. de Con. Ev. l. ii. c. 45.

AUG. Matthew and Mark, taking occasion from what had occurred above, relate here how John was slain by Herod. But Luke, who had long before given an account of John's sufferings, after mentioning that perplexity of Herod's, as to who our Lord was, immediately adds, *And the apostles when they were returned told Him all that they had done.*

BEDE. But they not only tell Him what they had done and taught, but also, as Matthew implies, the things which John suffered while they were occupied in teaching, are now repeated to Him either by His own, or, according to Matthew, by John's disciples. Matt. 14, 12.

ISIDORE. Our Lord because He hates the men of blood, and those that dwell with them, as long as they depart not from their crimes, after the murder of the Baptist left the murderers and departed; as it follows, *And He took them, and went aside privately into a desert place belonging to the city called Bethsaida.* BEDE. Now Bethsaida is in Galilee, the city of the Apostles Andrew, Peter, and Philip, near the lake of Gennesaret. Our Lord did not this from fear of death, (as some think,) but to spare His enemies, lest they should commit two murders, waiting also for the proper time for His own sufferings. CHRYS. Now He did not depart before, but after it was told Him what had happened, manifesting in each particular the reality of His incarnation. THEOPHYL. But our Lord went into a desert place because He was about to perform the miracle of the loaves of bread, that no one should say that the bread was brought from the neighbouring cities. CHRYS. Or He went into a desert place that no one might follow Him. But the people did not retire, but accompanied Him, as it follows, *And the people when they knew it, followed Him.* CYRIL. Some indeed asking to be delivered from evil spirits, but others desiring of Him the removal of their diseases; those also who were delighted with His teaching attended Him diligently.

Isid. Pelus, l. 1. ep. 233.

Chrys. Hom. 49. in Matt.

Chrys. ubi sup.

BEDE. But He as the powerful and merciful Saviour by receiving the weary, by teaching the ignorant, curing the sick, filling the hungry, implies how He was pleased with their devotion; as it follows, *And He received them, and spake unto them of the kingdom of God, &c.* THEOPHYL. That you may learn that the wisdom which is in us is distributed into word and work, and that it becomes us to speak of what has been done, and to do what we speak of. But when the day was wearing away, the disciples now beginning to have a care of others take compassion on the multitude. CYRIL. For, as has been said, they sought to be healed of different diseases, and because the disciples saw that what they sought might

be accomplished by His simple assent, they say, Send them away, that they be no more distressed. But mark the overflowing kindness of Him who is asked. He not only grants those things which the disciples seek, but to those who follow Him, He supplies the bounty of a munificent hand, commanding food to be set before them; as it follows, *But He said unto them, Give ye them to eat.* THEOPHYL. Now He said not this as ignorant of their answer, but wishing to induce them to tell Him how much bread they had, that so a great miracle might be manifested through their confession, when the quantity of bread was made known.

CYRIL. But this was a command which the disciples were unable to comply with, since they had with them but five loaves and two fishes. As it follows, *And they said, We have no more but five loaves and two fishes; except we go and buy meat for all this people.* AUG. In these words indeed Luke has strung together in one sentence the answer of Philip, saying, *Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, but that every one may have a little,* and the answer of Andrew, *There is a lad here who has five loaves and two small fishes,* as John relates. For when Luke says, *We have no more but five loaves and two fishes,* he refers to the answer of Andrew. But that which he added, *Except we go and buy food for all the people,* seems to belong to Philip's answer, save that he is silent about *the two hundred pennyworth,* although this may be implied also in the expression of Andrew himself. For when he had said, *There is a lad here who has five loaves and two fishes,* he added, *But what are these among so many?* that is to say, *unless we go and buy meat for all this people.* From which diversity of words, but harmony of things and opinions, it is sufficiently evident that we have this wholesome lesson given us, that we must seek for nothing in words but the meaning of the speaker; and to explain this clearly, ought to be the care of all truth-telling authors whenever they relate anything concerning man, or angel, or God. CYRIL. But that the difficulty of the miracle may be still more enhanced, the number of men is stated to have been by no means small. As it follows, *And there were about five thousand men, besides women and children,* as another Evangelist relates.

Aug. de Con. Ev. l. ii. c. 46.

John 6, 9.

Matt. 14, 21

THEOPHYL. Our Lord teaches us, that when we entertain any one, we ought to make him sit down at meat, and partake of every comfort. Hence it follows, *And He said to His disciples, &c.* AUG. That Luke says here, that the men were ordered to sit down by fifties, but Mark, by fifties and hundreds, does not matter, seeing that one spoke of a part, the other of the whole. But if one had mentioned only the fifties, and the other only the hundreds, they would seem to be greatly opposed to one another; nor would it be sufficiently distinct which of the two was said. But who will not admit, that one was mentioned by one Evangelist, the other by another, and that if more attentively considered it must be found so. But I have said thus much, because often certain things of this kind exist, which to those who take little heed and judge hastily appear contrary to one another, and yet are not so. CHRYS. And to make men believe that He came from the Father, Christ when He was about to work the miracle looked up to heaven. As it follows, *Then He took the five loaves, &c.* CYRIL. This also He did purposely for our sakes, that we may learn that at the commencement of a feast when we are going to break bread, we ought to offer thanks for it to God, and to draw forth the heavenly blessing upon it. As it follows, *And He blessed, and brake.* CHRYS. He distributes to them by the hands of His disciples, so honouring them that they might not forget it when the miracle was past. Now He did not create food for the multitude out of what did not exist, that He might stop the mouth of the Manichæans, who say that the creatures are independent of Him; shewing that He Himself is both the Giver of food, and the same who said, *Let the earth bring forth, &c.* He makes also the fishes to increase, to signify that He has dominion over the seas, as well as the dry land. But well did He perform a special miracle for the weak, at the same time that He gives also a general blessing in feeding all the strong as well as the weak. *And they did all eat, and were filled.* GREG. NYSS. For whom neither the heaven rained manna, nor the earth brought forth corn according to its nature, but from the unspeakable garner of divine power the blessing was poured forth. The bread is supplied in the hands of those who serve, it is even increased through the

Aug. ubi sup.

Chrys. Hom. 49. in Matt.

Chrys. ubi sup.

ἀλλοτριούντων. κτίσιν.

Greg. Orat. Catech. Mag. c. 23.

fulness of those who eat. The sea supplied not their wants with the food of fishes, but He who placed in the sea the race of fishes. AMBROSE. It is clear that the multitude were filled not by a scanty meal, but by a constant and increasing supply of food. You might see in an incomprehensible manner amid the hands of those who distributed, the particles multiplying which they broke not; the fragments too, untouched by the fingers of the breakers, spontaneously mounting up. CYRIL. Nor was this all that the miracle came to; but it follows, *And there was taken up of the fragments that remained, twelve baskets*, that this might be a manifest proof that a work of love to our neighbour will claim a rich reward from God. THEOPHYL. And that we might learn the value of hospitality, and how much our own store is increased when we help those that need. CHRYS. But He caused not loaves to remain over, but fragments, that He might shew them to be the remnants of the loaves, and these were made to be of that number, that there might be as many baskets as disciples.

Chrys. ubi sup.

AMBROSE. After that she who received the type of the Church was cured of the issue of blood, and that the Apostles were appointed to preach the Gospel of the kingdom of God, the nourishment of heavenly grace is imparted. But mark to whom it is imparted. Not to the indolent, not to those in a city, of rank in the synagogue, or in high secular office, but to those who seek Christ in the desert. BEDE. Who Himself having left Judæa, which by unbelief had bereft herself of the source of prophecy, in the desert of the Church which had no husband, dispenses the food of the word. But many companies of the faithful leaving the city of their former manner of life, and their various opinions, follow Christ into the deserts of the Gentiles. AMBROSE. But they who are not proud are themselves received by Christ, and the Word of God speaks with them, not about worldly things, but of the kingdom of God. And if any have ulcers of bodily passions, to these He willingly affords His cure. But every where the order of the mystery is preserved, that first through the remission of sins the wounds should be healed, but afterwards the nourishment of the heavenly table should plentifully abound.

BEDE. Now when the day was going down, he refreshes the multitudes, that is, as the end of the world approaches, or when the Sun of righteousness sets for us. AMBROSE. Although the multitude is not as yet fed with stronger food. For first, as milk, there are five loaves; secondly, seven; thirdly, the Body of Christ is the stronger food. But if any one fears to seek food, let him leave every thing that belongs to him, and listen to the word of God. But whoever begins to hear the word of God begins to eat, the Apostles begin to see him eating. And if they who eat, as yet know not what they eat, Christ knows; He knows that they eat not this world's food, but the food of Christ. For they did not as yet know that the food of a believing people was not to be bought and sold. Christ knew that we are rather to be bought with a ransom, but His banquet to be without price. BEDE. The Apostles had only got but the five loaves of the Mosaic law, and the two fishes of each covenant, which were covered in the secret place of obscure mysteries, as in the waters of the deep. But because men have five external senses, the five thousand men who followed the Lord signify those who still live in worldly ways, knowing well how to use the external things they possess. For they who entirely renounce the world are raised aloft in the enjoyment of His Gospel feast. But the different divisions of the guests indicate the different congregations of Churches throughout the world, which together compose the one Catholic. AMBROSE. But here the bread which Jesus brake is mystically indeed the word of God, and discourse concerning Christ, which when it is divided is increased. For from these few words, He ministered abundant nourishment to the people. He gave us words like loaves, which while they are tasted by our mouth are doubled. BEDE. Now our Saviour does not create new food for the hungry multitudes, but He took those things which the disciples had and blessed them, since coming in the flesh He preaches nothing else than what had been foretold, but demonstrates the words of prophecy to be pregnant with the mysteries of grace; He looks towards heaven, that thither He may teach us to direct the eye of the mind, there to seek the light of knowledge; He breaks and distributes to

the disciples to be placed before the multitude, because He revealed to them the Sacraments of the Law and the Prophets that they might preach them to the world.

Ambrose. Not without meaning are the fragments which remained over and above what the multitudes had eaten, collected by the disciples, since those things which are divine you may more easily find among the elect than among the people. Blessed is he who can collect those which remain over and above even to the learned. But for what reason did Christ fill twelve baskets, except that He
Ps. 81, 6. might solve that word concerning the Jewish people, *His hands served in the basket?* that is, the people who before collected mud for the pots, now through the cross of Christ gather up the nourishment of the heavenly life. Nor is this the office of few, but all. For by the twelve baskets, as if of each of the tribes, the foundation of the faith is spread abroad. Bede. Or by the twelve baskets the twelve Apostles are figured, and all succeeding teachers, despised indeed by men without, but within loaded with the fragments of saving food.

18. And it came to pass, as He was alone praying, His disciples were with Him: and He asked them, saying, Whom say the people that I am?

19. They answering said, John the Baptist; but some say, Elias; and others say, that one of the old prophets is risen again.

20. He said unto them, But whom say ye that I am? Peter answering said, The Christ of God.

21. And He straitly charged them, and commanded them to tell no man that thing;

22. Saying, The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and Chief Priests and Scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day.

Cyril. Our Lord having retired from the multitude, and being in a place apart, was engaged in prayer. As it is said, *And it came to pass, as He was alone praying.* For

He ordained Himself as an example of this, instructing His disciples by an easy method of teaching. For I suppose the rulers of the people ought to be superior also in good deeds, to those that are under them, ever holding converse with them in all necessary things, and treating of those things in which God delights. BEDE. Now the disciples were with the Lord, but He alone prayed to the Father, since the saints may be joined to the Lord in the bond of faith and love, but the Son alone is able to penetrate the incomprehensible secrets of the Father's will. Everywhere then He prays alone, for human wishes comprehend not the counsel of God, nor can any one be a partaker with Christ of the deep things of God. CYRIL. Now His engaging in prayer might perplex His disciples. For they saw Him praying like a man, whom before they had seen performing miracles with divine power. In order then to banish all perplexity of this kind, He asks them this question, not because He did not know the reports which they had gathered from without, but that He might rid them of the opinion of the many, and instil into them the true faith. Hence it follows, *And He asked them, saying, Whom say the people that I am?* BEDE. Rightly does our Lord, when about to enquire into the faith of the disciples, first enquire into the opinion of the multitudes, lest their confession should appear not to be determined by their knowledge, but to be formed by the opinion of the generality, and they should be considered not to believe from experience, but like Herod to be perplexed by different reports which they heard. AUG. Now it may raise a question, that Luke says that our Lord asked His disciples, *Whom do men say that I am,* at the same time that He was alone praying, and they also were with Him; whereas Mark says, that they were asked this question by our Lord on the way; but this is difficult only to him who never prayed on the way.

Aug. de Con. Ev. l. ii. c. 53.

AMBROSE. But it is no trifling opinion of the multitude which the disciples mention, when it is added, *But they answering said, John the Baptist,* (whom they knew to be beheaded;) but some say, Elias, (whom they thought would come,) but others say that one of the old Prophets is risen again. But to make this enquiry belongs to a different kind

of wisdom from ours, for if it were enough for the Apostle
1 Cor. 2, 2. Paul to know nothing but Christ Jesus, and Him crucified, what more can I desire to know than Christ? CYRIL. But mark the subtle skill of the question. For he directs them first to the praises of strangers, that having overthrown these, He might beget in them the right opinion. So when the disciples had given the opinion of the people, He asks them their own opinion; as it is added, *And He said unto them, Whom say ye that I am?* How marked is *ye!* He excludes them from the other, that they may avoid their opinions; as if He said, Ye who by My decree are called to the Apostleship, the witnesses of My miracles, whom do ye say that I am? But Peter anticipated the rest, and becomes the mouthpiece of the whole company, and launching forth into the eloquence of divine love, utters the confession of faith, as it is added, *Peter answering said, the Christ of God.* He says not merely that He was Christ of God, but now he uses the article. Hence it is in the Greek, *τὸν Χριστόν.* For many divinely accounted persons are in diverse ways called Christs, for some were anointed kings, some prophets. But we through Christ have been anointed by the Holy Spirit, have obtained the name of Christ. But there is only one who is the Christ of God and the Father, He alone as it were having His own Father who is in heaven. And so Luke agrees indeed in the same opinion as Matthew, who relates Peter to have said, *Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God,* but speaking briefly Luke says that Peter answered, *the Christ of God.* AMBROSE. In this one name there is the expression both of His divinity and incarnation, and the belief of His passion. He has therefore comprehended every thing, having expressed both the nature and the name wherein is all virtue.

summa virtutum.

CYRIL. But we must observe, that Peter most wisely confessed Christ to be one, against those who presumed to divide Immanuel into two Christs. For Christ did not enquire of them, saying, *Whom do men say the divine Word is?* but the *Son of man,* whom Peter confessed to be the Son of God. Herein then is Peter to be admired, and thought worthy of such chief honour, seeing that Him whom he marvelled at in our form, he believed to be the Christ of the Father, that

is to say, that the Word which proceeded of the Father's Substance was become man.

AMBROSE. But our Lord Jesus Christ was at first unwilling to be preached, lest an uproar should arise; as it follows, *And He straitly charged them, and commanded them to tell no man any thing.* For many reasons He commands His disciples to be silent; to deceive the prince of this world, to reject boasting, to teach humility. Christ then would not boast, and dost thou boast who art of ignoble birth? Likewise He did it to prevent rude and as yet imperfect disciples from being oppressed with the wonder of this awful announcement. They are then forbid to preach Him as the Son of God, that they might afterwards preach Him crucified. CHRYS. Timely also was our Lord's command that no one should tell that He was Christ, in order that when offences should be taken away and the sufferings of the cross completed, a proper opinion of Him might be firmly rooted in the minds of the hearers. For that which has once taken root and afterwards been torn up, when fresh planted will scarcely ever be preserved. But that which when once planted continues undisturbed, grows up securely. For if Peter was offended merely by what he heard, what would be the feelings of those many who, after they had heard that He was the Son of God, saw Him crucified, and spit upon? CYRIL. It was the duty then of the disciples to preach Him throughout the world. For this was the work of those who were chosen by Him to the office of the Apostleship. But as holy Scripture bears witness, *There is a time for every thing.* For it was fitting that the cross and resurrection should be accomplished, and then should follow the preaching of the Apostles; as it is spoken, saying, *The Son of Man must needs suffer many things.* AMBROSE. Perhaps because the Lord knew that the disciples would believe even the difficult mystery of the Passion and Resurrection, He wished to be Himself the proclaimer of His own Passion and Resurrection.

Chrys. Hom. 54. in Matt.

Eccles. 3, 1.

23. And He said to them all, If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.

24. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for My sake, the same shall save it.

25. For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?

26. For whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when He shall come in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels.

27. But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God.

Cyril. non occ. CYRIL. Great and noble leaders provoke the mighty in arms to deeds of valour, not only by promising them the honours of victory, but by declaring that suffering is in itself glorious. Such we see is the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ. For He had foretold to His disciples, that He must needs suffer the accusations of the Jews, be slain, and rise again on the third day. Lest then they should think that Christ indeed was to suffer persecution for the life of the world, but that they might lead a soft life, He shews them that they must needs pass through similar struggles, if they desired to obtain His glory. Hence it is said, *And He said unto all.* BEDE. He rightly addressed Himself to all, since He treats of the higher things (which relate to the belief in His birth and passion) apart with His disciples. Chrys. Hom. 55. in Matt. CHRYS. Now the Saviour of His great mercy and lovingkindness will have no one serve Him unwillingly and from constraint, but those only who come of their own accord, and are grateful for being allowed to serve Him. And so not by compelling men and putting a yoke upon them, but by persuasion and kindness, He draws unto Him every where those who are willing, saying, *If any man will, &c.*

Basil. in Cons. Mon. cap. 4. BASIL. But He has left His own life for an example of blameless conversation to those who are willing to obey Him; as He says, *Come after Me,* meaning thereby not a following of His body, for that would be impossible to

all, since our Lord is in heaven, but a due imitation of His life according to their capacities. BEDE. Now unless a man renounces himself, he comes not near to Him, who is above him; it is said therefore, *Let him deny himself.* BASIL. A denial of one's self is indeed a total forgetfulness of things past, and a forsaking of his own will and affection. ORIGEN. A man also denies himself when by a sufficient alteration of manners or a good conversation he changes a life of habitual wickedness. He who has long lived in lasciviousness, abandons his lustful self when he becomes chaste, and in like manner a forsaking of any crimes is a denial of one's self.

Basil. in reg. fus. Int. 6.

Orig. in Matt. tom. 12.

BASIL. Now a desire of suffering death for Christ and a mortification of one's members which are upon the earth, and a manful resolution to undergo any danger for Christ, and an indifference towards the present life, this it is to take up one's cross. Hence it is added, *And let him take up his cross daily.* THEOPHYL. By *the cross,* He speaks of an ignominious death, meaning, that if any one will follow Christ, he must not for his own sake flee from even an ignominious death. GREG. In two ways also is the cross taken up, either when the body is afflicted through abstinence, or the mind touched by sympathy. GREEK EX. He rightly joins these two, *Let him deny himself, and let him take up his cross,* for as he who is prepared to ascend the cross conceives in his mind the intention of death, and so goes on thinking to have no more part in this life, so he who is willing to follow our Lord, ought first to deny himself, *and so take up his cross,* that his will may be ready to endure every calamity.

Basil. ubi sup.

Greg. Hom. 32. in Ev.

Isaac. Monac.

BASIL. Herein then stands a man's perfection, that he should have his affections hardened, even towards life itself, and have ever about him the answer of death[a], that he should by no means trust in himself. But perfection takes its beginning from the relinquishment of things foreign to it; suppose these to be possessions or vain-glory, or affection for things that profit not.

Basil. ubi sup. Int. 8.

2 Cor. 1, 9. ἀποκρίμα.

BEDE. We are bid then to take up the cross of which we have above spoken, and having taken it, to follow our Lord

[a] Responsum mortis. Vulg. S. Thomas in 2 Cor. 1. Lect. iii. explains it by certitudinem mortis.

who bore His own cross. Hence it follows, *And let him follow Me.* Origen. ut sup. ORIGEN. He assigns the cause of this when He adds, *For whosoever will save his life shall lose it;* that is, whosoever will according to the present life keep his own soul fixed on things of sense, the same shall lose it, never reaching to the bounds of happiness. But on the other hand He adds, *but whosoever shall lose his life for My sake, shall save it.* That is, whosoever forsakes the things of sense looking upon truth, and exposes himself to death, as it were losing his life for Christ, shall the rather save it. If then it is a blessed thing to save our life, (with regard to that safety which is in God,) there must be also a certain good surrender of life which is made by looking upon Christ. It seems also to me from resemblance to that denying of one's self which has been before spoken of, that it becomes us to lose a certain sinful life of ours, to take up that which is saved by virtue.

Cyril. non occ. CYRIL. But that incomparable exercise of the passion of Christ, which surpasses the delights and precious things of the world, is alluded to when He adds, *What is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world and lose himself, or be a cast away?* As if He says, When a man, through his looking after the present delights, gains pleasure, and refuses indeed to suffer, but chooses to live splendidly in his riches, what advantage will he get then when he has lost 1 Cor. 7, 31. his soul? For the fashion of this world passeth away, and Sap. 5, 9. pleasant things depart as a shadow. For the treasures of Prov. 10, 2. ungodliness shall not profit, but righteousness snatches Greg. Hom. 32. in Ev. a man from death. GREG. Since then the holy Church has one time of persecution, another time of peace, our Lord has noticed both times in His command to us. For at the time of persecution we must lay down our soul, that is our life, which He signified, saying, *Whosoever shall lose his life.* But in time of peace, those things which have the greatest power to subdue us, our earthly desires, must be vanquished; which He signified, saying, *What does it profit a man, &c.* Now we commonly despise all fleeting things, but still we are so checked by that feeling of shame so common to man, that we are yet unable to express in words the uprightness which we preserve in our hearts. But to this

wound the Lord indeed subjoins a suitable application, saying, *For whoever shall be ashamed of Me and My words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed.* THEOPHYL. He is ashamed of Christ who says, Am I to believe on Him that is crucified? He also is ashamed of His words who despises the simplicity of the Gospel. But of him shall the Lord be ashamed in His kingdom, in the same manner as if a master of a household should have a bad servant, and be ashamed to have him. CYRIL. Now He strikes fear into their hearts, when He says that He will descend from heaven, not in His former humility and condition, proportioned to our capacities for receiving Him, but in the glory of the Father, with the Angels ministering unto Him. For it follows, *When He shall come in His own glory, and His Father's, and of the holy angels.* Awful then and fatal will it be, to be branded as an enemy, and slothful in business, when so great a Judge shall descend with the armies of Angels standing round Him. But from this you may perceive, that though He has taken to Himself our flesh and blood, the Son is no less God, seeing that He promises to come in the glory of God the Father, and that Angels shall minister to Him as the Judge of all, who was made man like unto us. AMBROSE. Now our Lord while He ever raises us to look to the future reward of virtue, and teaches us how good it is to despise worldly things, so also He supports the weakness of the human mind by a present recompense. For it is a hard thing to take up the cross, and expose your life to danger and your body to death; to give up what you are, when you wish to be what you are not; and even the loftiest virtue seldom exchanges things present for future. The good Master then, lest any man should be broken down by despair or weariness, straightway promises that He will be seen by the faithful, in these words, *But I say unto you, There are some standing here who shall not taste of death till they see the kingdom of God.* THEOPHYL. That is, the glory in which the righteous shall be. Now He said this of His transfiguration, which was the type of the glory to come; as if He said, There are some standing here, Peter, James, and John, who shall not reach death before they have seen at the time of My transfiguration what will be the glory of those

Greg. Hom. 32. in Ev. who confess Me. GREG. Or, by the kingdom of God in this place, is meant the present Church; and some of His disciples were to live in the body up to that time, when they should behold the Church of God built and raised up against the glory of the world. AMBROSE. If then we also wish not to fear death, let us stand where Christ is. For they only cannot taste death who are able to stand with Christ, wherein we may consider from the nature of the very word, that they will not experience even the slightest perception of death, who are thought worthy to obtain union with Christ. At least let us suppose that the death of the body is tasted by touch, the life of the soul preserved by possession; for here not the death of the body, but of the soul, is denied.

28. And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, He took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray.

29. And as He prayed, the fashion of His countenance was altered, and His raiment was white and glistering.

30. And behold there talked with Him two men, which were Moses and Elias;

31. Who appeared in glory, and spake of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem.

EUSEBIUS. Our Lord, when He made known to His disciples the great mystery of His second coming, that it might not seem that they were to believe in His words only, proceeds to works, manifesting to them, through the eyes of their faith, the image of His kingdom; as it follows, *And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, He took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray.* Damas. Orat. de Transfig. §. 8. DAMASCENE. Matthew and Mark indeed say that the transfiguration took place on the sixth day after the promise made to the disciples, but Luke on the eighth. But there is no disagreement in these testimonies, but they who make the number six, taking off a day at each end, that is, the first and the last, the day on which He makes the promise, and that on which He fulfilled it, have reckoned

only the intervening ones, but He who makes the number eight, has counted in each of the two days above mentioned. But why were not all called, but only some, to behold the sight? There was only one indeed who was unworthy to see the divinity, namely Judas, according to the word of Isaiah, *Let the wicked be taken away, that he should not behold the glory of God.* If then he alone had been sent away, he might have, as it were from envy, been provoked to greater wickedness. Henceforward He takes away from the traitor every pretext for his treachery, seeing that He left below the rest of the company of the Apostles. But He took with Him three, that in the mouths of two or three witnesses every word should be established. He took Peter, indeed, because He wished to shew him that the witness he had borne to Him was confirmed by the witness of the Father, and that he was as it were to preside over the whole Church. He took with Him James, who was to be the first of all the disciples to die for Christ; but He took John as the clearest singer of the sacred doctrine, that having seen the glory of the Son, which submits not to time, he might sound forth. *In the beginning was the Word.* AMBROSE. Or, Peter went up, who received the keys of the kingdom of heaven; John, to whom was committed our Lord's mother; James, who first suffered martyrdom. THEOPHYL. Or, He takes these with Him as men who were able to conceal this thing, and reveal it to no one else. But going up into a mountain to pray, He teaches us to pray solitary, and going up, into stooping to earthly things.

Isa. 26, 10. LXX.

John 1, 1.

Acts 12, 1

DAMASCENE. Servants, however, pray in one way; our Lord prayed in another. For the prayer of the servant is offered up by the lifting up of the mind to God, but the holy mind of Christ, (who was hypostatically united to God,) prayed, that He might lead us by the hand to the ascent, whereby we mount up in prayer to God, and teach us that He is not opposed to God, but reverences the Father as His beginning; nay, even tempting the tyrant, who sought from Him whether He were God, (which the power of His miracles declared,) He concealed as it were under the bait a hook; that he who had deceived man with the hope of divinity might fitly himself be caught with the clothing of humanity.

Damas. ut sup. 10.

ὑπόστασιν.

ὡς ἀρχὴν ἑαυτόν.

Prayer is the revelation of Divine glory; as it follows, *And as He prayed, the fashion of His countenance was altered.* CYRIL. Not as though His body changed its human form, but a certain glistening glory overspread it. DAMASCENE. Now the devil, seeing His face shining in prayer, recollected Moses, whose face was glorified. But Moses indeed was arrayed with a glory, which came from without; our Lord, with that which proceeded from the inherent brightness of Divine glory. For since in the hypostatical union there is one and the same glory of the Word and the flesh, He is transfigured not as receiving what He was not, but manifesting to His disciples what He was. Hence, according to Matthew, it is said, that He was transfigured before them, and that His face shone as the sun; for what the sun is in things of sense, God is in spiritual things. And as the sun, which is the fountain of light, cannot be easily seen, but its light is perceived from that which reaches the earth; so the countenance of Christ shines more intensely, like the sun, but His raiment is white as snow; as it follows, *And His raiment was white and glistering;* that is, lighted up by its participation of the divine light. And a little afterwards, But while these things were so, that it might be shewn there was but one Lord of the new and old covenant, and the mouths of heretics might be shut, and men might believe on the resurrection, and He also, who was transfigured, be believed to be the Lord of the living and the dead, Moses and Elias, as servants, stand by their Lord in His glory; hence it follows, *And behold there talked with Him two men.* For it became men, seeing the glory and confidence of their fellow servants, to admire indeed the merciful condescension of the Lord, but to emulate those who had laboured before them, and looking to the pleasantness of future blessings, to be the more strengthened for conflicts. For he who has known the reward of his labours, will the more easily endure them. CHRYS. Or else this took place because the multitude said He was Elias or Jeremias, to shew the distinction between our Lord and His servants. And to make it plain that He was not an enemy of God, and transgressor of the law, He shewed these two standing by Him; (for else, Moses the lawgiver, and Elias who was zealous for the glory of

Damas. ut sup. 13.

Exod. 34, 29.

Matt. 17, 2.

Chrys. Hom. 56. in Matt.

God, had not stood by Him,) but also to give testimony to the virtues of the men. For each had ofttimes exposed himself to death in keeping the divine commands. He wishes also His disciples to imitate them in the government of the people, that they might be indeed meek like Moses, and zealous like Elias. He introduces them also to set forth the glory of His cross, to console Peter and the others who feared His Passion. Hence it follows, *And spake of His decease, which He should accomplish at Jerusalem.* CYRIL. The mystery, namely, of His Incarnation, also the life-giving Passion accomplished on the sacred cross. AMBROSE. Now in a mystical manner, after the words above said, is exhibited the transfiguration of Christ, since he who hears the words of Christ, and believes, shall see the glory of His resurrection. For, on the eighth day the resurrection took place. Hence also several Psalms are written, 'for the eighth,' or perhaps it was that He might make manifest pro octava. what He had said, *that he who for the word of God shall lose his own life, shall save it,* seeing that He will make good His promises at the resurrection. BEDE. For as He rose from the dead after the seventh day of the Sabbath, during which He lay in the tomb, we also after the six ages of this world, and the seventh of the rest of souls, which meanwhile is passed in another life, shall rise again as it were in the eighth age. AMBROSE. But Matthew and Mark have related that He took them with Him after six days, of which we may say after 6000 years, (for a thousand years in the Lord's sight are as one day;) but more than 6000 years are reckoned. We had rather then take the six days symbolically, that in six days the works of the world were completed, that by the time we may understand the works, by the works the world. And so the times of the world being finished, the resurrection to come is declared; or because, He who has ascended above the world, and has passed beyond the moments of this life, is waiting, seated as it were on a high place, for the everlasting fruit of the resurrection. BEDE. Hence He ascends the mountain to pray and be transfigured, to shew that those who expect the fruit of the resurrection, and desire to see the King in His glory, ought to have the dwelling place of their hearts on high, and be ever on their

knees in prayer. AMBROSE. I should think that in the three who are taken up into the mountain, was contained in a mystery the human race, because from the three sons of Noah sprung the whole race of man; I did not perceive that they were chosen out. Three then are chosen to ascend the mountain, because none can see the glory of the resurrection, but they who have preserved the mystery of the Trinity with inviolable purity of faith.

BEDE. Now the transfigured Saviour shews the glory of His own coming, or our resurrection; who as He then appeared to His Apostles shall in like manner appear to all the elect. But the raiment of the Lord is taken for the band of His Saints, which in truth when our Lord was upon earth seemed to be despised, but when He sought the mount,
1 John 3, 2. shines with a new whiteness; for *now are we the sons of God; and it does not yet appear what we shall be. But we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him.*

AMBROSE. Or else, according to your capacity is the word either lessened or increased to you, and unless you ascend the summit of a higher wisdom, you behold not what glory there is in the word of God. Now the garments of the Word are the discourses of the Scriptures, and certain clothings of the Divine mind; and as His raiment shone white, so in the eyes of your understanding, the sense of the divine words becomes clear. Hence after Moses, Elias; that is, the Law and the Prophets in the Word. For neither can the Law exist without the Word, nor the Prophet, unless he prophesied of the Son of God.

32. But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep: and when they were awake, they saw His glory, and the two men that stood with Him.

33. And it came to pass, as they departed from Him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias: not knowing what he said.

34. While he thus spake, there came a cloud, and

overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud.

35. And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is My beloved Son: hear Him.

36. And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone. And they kept it close, and told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen.

Theophyl. While Christ is engaged in prayer, Peter is heavy with sleep, for he was weak, and did what was natural to man; as it is said, *But Peter and they that were with Him, were heavy with sleep.* But when they awake, they behold His glory, and the two men with Him: as it follows, *And when they were awake, they saw His glory, and the two men that stood with Him.* Chrys. Or, by the word sleep, he means that strange maze that fell upon them by reason of the vision. For it was not night time, but the exceeding brightness of the light weighed down their weak eyes. Ambrose. For the incomprehensible brightness of the Divine nature oppresses our bodily senses. For if the sight of the body is unable to contain the sun's ray when opposite to the eyes which behold it, how can the corruption of our fleshly members endure the glory of God? And perhaps they were oppressed with sleep, that after their rest they might behold the sight of the resurrection. Therefore when they were awake they saw His glory. For no one, except he is watching, sees the glory of Christ. Peter was delighted, and as the allurements of this world enticed him not, was carried away by the glory of the resurrection. Hence it follows, *And it came to pass as they departed, &c.* Cyril. For perhaps holy Peter imagined that the kingdom of heaven was at hand, and therefore it seemed good to him to abide on the mount. Damas. It were not good for thee, Peter, that Christ should abide there, for if He had remained, the promise made to thee would never receive its accomplishment. For neither wouldest thou have obtained the keys of the kingdom, nor the tyranny of death been abolished. Seek not bliss before its time, as Adam did to be made a God. The time shall come when thou shalt enjoy the sight with-

Chrys. Hom. 56. in Matt.

Damas. Orat. de Transfig.

out ceasing, and dwell together with Him who is light and life.

AMBROSE. But Peter distinguished not only by earnest feeling, but also by devout deeds, wishing like a zealous workman to build three tabernacles, offers the service of their united labour; for it follows, *Let us make three tabernacles,* Damas ubi sup. *one for Thee, &c.* DAMAS. But the Lord ordained thee not the builder of tabernacles, but of the universal Church. Thy words have been brought to pass by thy disciples, by thy sheep, in building a tabernacle, not only for Christ, but also for His servants. But Peter said not this deliberately, but through the inspiration of the Spirit revealing things to come, as it follows, *not knowing what he said.* CYRIL. He knew not what he said, for neither was the time come for the end of the world, or for the Saints' enjoyment of their promised hope. And when the dispensation was now commencing, how was it fitting that Christ should abandon His Damas. ubi sup. love of the world, who was willing to suffer for it? DAMAS. It behoved Him also not to confine the fruit of his incarnation to the service of those only who were on the mount, but to extend it to all believers, which was to be accomplished non occ. by His cross and passion. TIT. BOST. Peter also was ignorant what he said, seeing that it was not proper to make three tabernacles for the three. For the servants are not received with their Lord, the creature is not placed beside the Creator. AMBROSE. Nor does the condition of man in this corruptible body allow of making a tabernacle to God, whether in the soul or in the body, or in any other place; and although he knew not what he said, yet a service was offered which not by any deliberate forwardness, but its premature devotion, receives in abundance the fruits of piety. For his ignorance was part of his condition, his offer of de- Chrys. ubi sup. votion. CHRYS. Or else Peter heard that it was necessary Christ must die, and on the third day rise again, but he saw around him a very remote and solitary place; he supposed therefore that the place had some great protection. For this Exod. 24, 15. reason he said, *It is good for us to be here.* Moses too was 2 Kings 1, 12. present, who entered into the cloud. Elias, who on the mount brought down fire from heaven. The Evangelist then, to indicate the confusion of mind in which he utters

this, added, *Not knowing what he said.* Aug. Now in what Luke here says of Moses and Elias, *And it came to pass as they departed from Him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here,* he must not be thought contrary to Matthew and Mark, who have so connected Peter's suggestion of this, as if Moses and Elias were still speaking with our Lord. For they did not expressly state that Peter said it then, but rather were silent about what Luke added, that *as they departed,* Peter suggested this to our Lord. Aug. de Con. Ev. l. ii. c. 56.

Theophyl. But while Peter spake, our Lord builds a tabernacle not made with hands, and enters into it with the Prophets. Hence it is added, *While he thus spake there came a cloud and overshadowed them,* to shew that He was not inferior to the Father. For as in the Old Testament it was said, the Lord dwelt in the cloud, so now also a cloud received our Lord, not a dark cloud, but bright and shining.

Basil. For the obscurity of the Law had passed away; for as smoke is caused by the fire, so the cloud by light; but because a cloud is the sign of calmness, the rest of the future state is signified by the covering of a cloud. Ambrose. For it is the overshadowing of the divine spirit which does not darken, but reveals secret things to the hearts of men. Origen. Now His disciples being unable to bear this, fell down, humbled under the mighty hand of God, greatly afraid since they knew what was said to Moses, *No man shall see My face, and live.* Hence it follows, *And they feared as they entered into the cloud.* Ambrose. Now observe, that the cloud was not black from the darkness of condensed air, and such as to overcast the sky with a horrible gloom, but a shining cloud, from which we were not moistened with rain, but as the voice of Almighty God came forth the dew of faith was shed upon the hearts of men. For it follows, *And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is My beloved Son: hear ye Him.* Elias was not His Son. Moses was not. But this is the Son whom you see alone. Cyril. How then should men suppose Him who is really the Son to be made or created, when God the Father thundered from above, *This is My beloved Son!* as if He said, Not one of My sons, but He who is truly and by nature My Son, according to whose example the others are adopted.

Basil. in Esai. c. 4. 5.

Orig. in Matt. tom. 12.

Cyril. in Thes. lib. 12. c. 14.

He ordered them then to obey Him, when He added, *Hear ye Him.* And to obey Him more than Moses and Elias, for Christ is the end of the Law and the Prophets. Hence the Evangelist adds significantly, *And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone.* THEOPHYL. Lest in truth any one should suppose that these words, *This is My beloved Son,* were uttered about Moses or Elias. AMBROSE. They then departed, when our Lord's manifestation had begun. There are three seen at the beginning, one at the end; for faith being made perfect, they are one. Therefore are they also received into the body of Christ, because we also shall be one in Christ Jesus; or perhaps, because the Law and the Prophets came out from the Word. THEOPHYL. Now those things which began from the Word, end in the Word. For by this he implies that up to a certain time the Law and the Prophets appear, as here Moses and Elias; but afterwards, at their departure, Jesus is alone. For now abideth the Gospel, legal things having passed away. BEDE. And mark, that as when our Lord was baptized in Jordan, so also when He was glorified on the Mount, the mystery of the whole Trinity is declared; for His glory which we confess at baptism, we shall see at the resurrection. Nor in vain does the Holy Spirit appear here in the cloud, there in the form of a dove, seeing that he who now preserves with a simple heart the faith which he receives, shall then in the light of open vision look upon those things which he believed.

Orig. ubi sup. ORIGEN. Now Jesus wishes not those things which relate to His glory to be spoken of before His passion. Hence it follows, *And they kept it close.* For men would have been offended, especially the multitude, if they saw Him crucified who had been so glorified. Damas. ubi sup. DAMAS. This also our Lord commands, since He knew His disciples to be imperfect, seeing that they had not yet received the full measure of the Spirit, lest the hearts of others who had not seen should be prostrated by sorrow, and lest the traitor should be stirred up to a frantic hatred.

37. And it came to pass, that on the next day, when they were come down from the hill, much people met Him.

38. And, behold, a man of the company cried out saying, Master, I beseech Thee, look upon my son: for he is mine only child.

39. And, lo, a spirit taketh him, and he suddenly crieth out; and it teareth him that he foameth again, and bruising him hardly departeth from him.

40. And I besought Thy disciples to cast him out; and they could not.

41. And Jesus answering said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you, and suffer you? Bring thy son hither.

42. And as he was yet a coming, the devil threw him down, and tare him. And Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the child, and delivered him again to his father.

43. And they were all amazed at the mighty power of God.

BEDE. Certain places accord with certain events. On the Mount our Lord prays, is transfigured, reveals the secrets of His glory to His disciples; as He descends to the lower parts, He is received by a large concourse. As it is said, *And it came to pass, that on the next day, when He was come down from the hill, much people met Him.* Above He makes known the voice of the Father, below He expels the evil spirits. Hence it follows, *And, behold, a man of the company cried out, saying, Master, I beseech Thee look upon my son.* TIT. non occ.
BOST. It seems indeed to me that this was a wise man. For he said not to the Saviour, "Do this or that," but, *Look on my son,* for this suffices for his salvation; as the prophet said, *Look on me, and have mercy on me;* and he says, *on my son,* to shew that his was a reasonable forwardness in crying out aloud among the multitude. He adds, *for he is mine only child.* As if to say, There is none other I can expect to be the consolation of my old age. He next enters into the sufferings, that he may move his Hearer to compassion, saying, *And, lo, the spirit taketh him.* He then seems to accuse the disciples, but his answer is rather a justification of his

casting aside his fear, saying, *And I besought Thy disciples to cast him out: and they could not.* As if he said, Think not that I have come lightly unto Thee. Marvellous is Thy greatness! I did not intrude upon Thy presence at once, but went first to Thy disciples. Because they failed to work the cure, I am now compelled to approach Thee. Our Lord therefore does not blame him, but the faithless generation; for it follows, *And Jesus answering said, O faithless and perverse generation.*

Chrys. Hom. 57. in Matt. Mark 9. 21, 23. CHRYS. But that this man was much weakened in faith, the writings of the Gospel shew us in several places. In that place where he says, *Help Thou my unbelief;* and, *If Thou canst.* And in that where Christ said, *All things are possible to him that believeth, &c.* Chrys. ubi sup. CHRYS. Hence it seems to me more correct to account the father of the demoniac unbelieving, because he also casts a reproach upon the holy Apostles, saying that they could not subdue the evil spirits. But it were better to have sought favour from God by honouring Him, for He has respect to them that fear Him. But he who says that those are weak with respect to their power over evil spirits, who have obtained that power from Christ, calumniates rather the grace than those who are adorned with that grace in whom Christ works. Christ is therefore offended with the accusation of the saints, to whom was entrusted the word of holy preaching. Wherefore the Lord rebukes him and those like-minded with him, saying, *O faithless and perverse generation.* As if He said, Because of your unbelief the grace has not received its accomplishment.

Chrys. Hom. 57. in Matt. CHRYS. Now He does not direct His words to him alone, but to all the Jews, lest He should cause him to doubt. For it must have been that many were offended. THEOPHYL. By the word *perverse,* He shews that this wickedness in them was not originally or by nature, for by nature indeed they were upright, being the seed of Abraham, but became perverted through malice. CYRIL. As if not knowing how to continue in the right beginnings. Now Christ disdains to dwell with those who are thus disposed. Hence He says, *How long shall I be with you, and suffer you?* Feeling troubled with their company, because of their evil deeds. Chrys. ubi sup. CHRYS. Hereby also He shews that His departure was de-

sired by Him, not because the suffering of the cross was grievous, but rather their conversation. BEDE. Not that weariness has overcome His patience, but after the manner of a physician, when he sees a sick man acting contrary to his commands, he says, 'How long shall I come to thy house, when I order one thing, you do another.' But to prove that He was not angry with the man, but with the sin, He immediately added, *Bring thy son hither.*

TIT. BOST. He might indeed have healed him by His simple command, but He makes his sufferings public, bringing the weak in faith to the sight of things present. Then the devil, when he perceived our Lord, rends and dashes the child down; as it follows, *And as he was yet a coming, the devil threw him down, and tare him;* that so first the sufferings should be made manifest, then the remedy be applied.
CHRYS. The Lord however does this not for display, but for Chrys.
the father's sake, that upon seeing the devil disturbed at the ubi sup.
mere summons, he might thus at least be led to the belief of the future miracles; of which it follows, *And Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the child, and delivered him again unto his father.* CYRIL. Now before not his father but the devil possessed him, but now the Evangelist adds that the people were astonished at the greatness of God, saying, *And all were amazed at the mighty power of God,* which he says, because of the gift of Christ, who conferred on the holy Apostles also the power of working divine miracles, and having the mastery over evil spirits.

BEDE. Now in a mystical manner in proportion to their deserts does our Lord daily ascend to some men, seeing that the perfect and those whose conversation is in heaven, He glorifies by exalting higher, instructing them in things eternal, and teaching them things which cannot be heard by the multitude, but to others He descends, in that He strengthens the earthly and foolish men, teaching and chastening them.
Now this demoniac Matthew calls a lunatic; Mark, deaf and Matt.
dumb. Matthew signifies those who change as the moon, 17, 15. Mark
increasing and decreasing through different vices, Mark those 9, 25.
who are dumb in not confessing the faith, deaf in not hearing the very word of faith. While the boy is coming to our Lord, he is dashed to the ground; because men when turned

to the Lord are often grievously afflicted by the devil, that he may instil a hatred of virtue, or revenge the injury of his expulsion. As in the beginning of the Church he waged as many fierce conflicts as he had to bewail losses suddenly brought upon his kingdom. But our Lord rebukes not the boy who suffered violence, but the evil spirit who inflicted it; for he who desires to correct the sinner, ought by reproof and abhorrence to drive away the vice, but to revive the man by gentleness, until he can restore him to the spiritual father of the Church.

43. —— But while they wondered every one at all things which Jesus did, He said unto His disciples,

44. Let these sayings sink down into your ears: for the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men.

45. But they understood not this saying, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not: and they feared to ask him of that saying.

Cyril. non occ. Cyril. Every thing that Jesus did claimed admiration from all men for a peculiar and divine light reflected upon Ps. 21, 5. each of His works, according to the Psalms, *honour and majesty wilt thou lay upon Him.* Although all indeed marvelled at those things which He did, He however addresses what follows, not to all, but to His disciples; as it is said, *But while they wondered every one, &c.* He had shewn His glory on the mount to His disciples, and after this delivered a man from an evil spirit, but it was necessary for Him to undergo His passion for our salvation. Now His disciples might have been perplexed, saying, "Have we then been deceived in that we thought Him to be God?" That they might know then what was to happen to Him, He bids them lay up in their minds as a certain deposit the mystery of His passion, saying, *Let these sayings sink down in your hearts.* By the word *your,* He distinguishes them from others. For the multitude were not to know that He was about to suffer, but were rather to be assured that the dead would rise again, destroying death, lest they should be offended. Tit. Bost.

While all thus were wondering at the miracles, He foretels His passion. For miracles do not save, but the cross conveys the benefit. Hence he adds, *For the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men.* ORIGEN. But it is not clearly expressed by whom He is to be delivered, for one says, that He is to be delivered up by Judas, another by the devil; but Paul says, that *God the Father delivered Him up for us all;* but Judas, as he delivered Him up for money, did it traitorously, the Father for His mercies' sake. THEOPHYL. Now our Lord in condescension to their infirmities and governing them with a kind of economy, did not permit them to understand what was said of the cross; as it follows, *But they understood not.* BEDE. This ignorance of the disciples proceeds not so much from slowness of understanding as from affection, for since they were yet carnal and ignorant of the mystery of the cross, they could not believe that He whom they thought to be really God would suffer death. And because they were often accustomed to hear Him speak by figure, they thought that He meant figuratively something else, by what He said of His betrayal. CYRIL. Now some one perhaps will say, How were the disciples ignorant of the mystery of the cross, seeing that it was touched upon in several places by the shadows of the Law? But as Paul relates, *Even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their hearts.* It becomes then those who approach Christ, to say, *Open Thou my eyes, that I may behold the wonderful things out of Thy law.* THEOPHYL. Mark also the reverence of the disciples in what follows, *And they feared to ask Him of that saying.* For fear is the first step to reverence.

Origen. in Matt. tom. 13.

Rom. 8, 32.

2 Cor. 3, 15.

Ps. 119, 18.

46. Then there arose a reasoning among them, which of them should be greatest.

47. And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart, took a child, and set him by Him.

48. And said unto them, Whosoever shall receive this child in My Name receiveth Me: and whosoever shall receive Me receiveth Him that sent Me: for he that is least among you all, the same shall be great.

49. And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy Name; and we forbad him, because he followeth not with us.

50. And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us.

Cyril. non occ. CYRIL. The devil lays plots of various kinds for them that love the best way of life. And if indeed by carnal allurements he can gain possession of a man's heart, he sharpens his love of pleasure; but if a man has escaped these snares, he excites in him a desire of glory, and this passion for vain-glory had seized some one of His apostles. Hence it is said, *Then there arose a reasoning among them, which of them should be the greatest.* For to have such thoughts, belongs to him who desires to be superior to the rest; but I think it improbable that all the disciples gave way to this weakness; and therefore suppose that the Evangelist, not to seem to lay the charge to any individual, expresses himself indefinitely, saying, *that there arose a reasoning among them.* THEOPHYL. Now it seems that this feeling was excited by the circumstance of their not being able to cure the demoniac. And while they were disputing thereupon, one said, It was not owing to my weakness, but another's, that he could not be cured; and so thereby was kindled a strife among them, which was the greatest. BEDE. Or, because they saw Peter, James, and John, taken apart to the mount, and the keys of the kingdom of heaven promised to Peter, they were angry that these three, or Peter, should have precedence over all; or because in the payment of the tribute they saw Peter made equal to the Lord, they supposed he was to be placed before the rest. But the attentive reader will find that the question was raised among them before the payment of the penny. (Matt. 18, 24.) For in truth Matthew relates that this took place at Capernaum; (Mark 9, 33.) but Mark says, *And He came to Capernaum, and being in the house, He asked them, What was it that ye disputed among yourselves in the way? But they held their peace; for by the way they had disputed among themselves who should be the greatest.* CYRIL. But our Lord, who knew how to save, seeing in the hearts of the disciples the

thought that had risen up thereupon, as it were a certain root of bitterness, plucks it up by the roots before it received growth. For when passions first begin in us, they are easily subdued; but having gained strength, they are with difficulty eradicated. Hence it follows, *And Jesus perceiving the thought of their heart, &c.* Let him who thinks Jesus to be mere man, know that he has erred; for the Word, although made flesh, remained God. For it is God alone who is able to search into the heart and reins. But in taking a child, and placing it beside Him, He did it for the Apostles' sake and ours. For the disease of vain-glory feeds generally on those who have the pre-eminence among other men. But a child has a pure mind and unspotted heart, and abides in simplicity of thought; he courts not honours, nor knows the limits of each one's power, nor shuns seeming to be inferior to others, bearing no moroseness in his mind or heart. Such the Lord embraces and loves, and thinks them worthy to be near Him, as those who had chosen to taste of the things which are His; for He says, *Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly of heart.* Hence it follows, *And He says unto them, Whosoever shall receive a child in My Name, receiveth Me.* As if He were to say, Seeing that there is one and the same reward to those that honour the saints, whether perchance such an one be the least, or one distinguished for honours and glory, for in him is Christ received, how vain is it to seek to have the pre-eminence! BEDE. Now herein He either teaches that the poor of Christ are to be received by those who wish to be greater simply for His honour, or He persuades men that they are children in malice. Hence when He said, *Whoever shall receive that child,* He adds, *in My Name;* that in truth they may pursue with diligence and reason for Christ's Name that form of virtue which the child observes, with only nature for its guide. But because He also teaches that He is received in the child, and He Himself was born unto us a child; lest it should be thought that this was all which was seen, He subjoined, *And whoever shall receive Me, receiveth Him that sent Me;* wishing verily to be believed, that as was the Father, such and so great was He. AMBROSE. For he who receives the followers of Christ, receives Christ; and he who receives the image of God, re-

ceives God; but because we cannot see the image of God, it has been made present to us by the incarnation of the Word, that the divine nature which is above us may be reconciled to us.

CYRIL. Now He still more plainly conveys the meaning of the preceding words, saying, *For he that is least among you all, the same shall be great;* in which He speaks of the modest man who from honesty thinks nothing high of himself. THEOPHYL. Because then our Lord had said, *He who is least among you all, the same shall be great,* John feared, lest perhaps they had done wrong in hindering a certain man by their own power. For a prohibition does not shew the prohibitor to be inferior, but to be one who thinks himself somewhat superior. Hence it is added, *And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy name, and we forbad him.* Not indeed from envy, but to distinguish the working of miracles, for he had not received the power of working miracles with them, nor had the Lord sent him as He did them; nor did He follow Jesus in all things. Hence he adds, *because he followeth not with us.*

AMBROSE. For John loving much, and therefore much beloved, thinks that they should be excluded from the privilege who did not practise obedience. CYRIL. But we ought to consider not so much the worker of the miracles, as the grace which was in him, who, by the power of Christ, performed miracles. But what if there should be both those which be numbered together with the Apostles, and those who are crowned with the grace of Christ; there are many
Matt. 10, 8. diversities in Christ's gifts. But because the Saviour had given the Apostles power to cast out evil spirits, they thought no one else but themselves alone was permitted to have this privilege granted to him, and therefore they come to enquire if it were lawful for others also to do this.

AMBROSE. Now John is not blamed, because he did this from love, but he is taught to know the difference between the strong and the weak. And therefore our Lord though He rewards the stronger, yet does not exclude the weak; as it follows, *And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not, for he that is not against you is for you.* True, O Lord. For both Joseph and Nicodemus, through fear Thy secret disciples,

when the time came, did not refuse their offices. But still Luke 11,
since Thou saidst elsewhere, *He that is not with Me is against* 23.
Me, and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth, explain unto us lest the two seem contrary to one another. And it seems to me, if any one considers the Searcher of hearts, he cannot doubt that every man's action is distinguished by the motive of his heart. CHRYS. For in the other place Chrys.
when He said, *He that is not with Me is against Me,* He shews Hom. 41. in Matt.
the Devil and the Jews to be opposed to Him; but here He shews that he who in Christ's Name cast out devils, is partly on their side. CYRIL. As if He said, On the side of you who love Christ, are all they who wish to follow those things which conduce to His glory, being crowned with His grace.

THEOPHYL. Marvel then at the power of Christ, how His grace works by means of the unworthy and those who are not His disciples: as also men are sanctified through the priests although the priests be not holy. AMBROSE. Now why does He in this place say that they are not to be hindered, who by the imposition of hands can subdue the unclean spirits, when according to Matthew, He says to Matt. 7,
these, *I never knew you?* But we ought to perceive that 23.
there is no difference of opinion, but that the decision is this, that not only the official works but works of virtue are required in a priest, and that the name of Christ is so great, that even to the unholy it serves to give defence, but not grace. Let no one then claim to himself the grace of cleansing a man, because in him the power of the eternal Name has worked. For not by thy merits, but by his own hatred, the devil is conquered. BEDE. Therefore in heretics and false catholics, it becomes us to abhor, and forbid not the common sacraments in which they are with us, and not against us, but the divisions contrary to peace and truth, wherein they are against us as following not the Lord.

51. And it came to pass, when the time was come that He should be received up, He stedfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem,

52. And sent messengers before His face: and they

went and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for Him.

53. And they did not receive Him, because His face was as though He would go to Jerusalem.

54. And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?

55. But He turned and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.

56. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village.

CYRIL. When the time was near at hand in which it behoved our Lord to accomplish His life-giving Passion, and ascend up to heaven, He determines to go up to Jerusalem, as it is said, *And it came to pass, &c.* TIT. BOST. Because it was necessary that the true Lamb should there be offered, where the typical lamb was sacrificed; but it is said, *He stedfastly set His face*, that is, He went not here and there traversing the villages and towns, but kept on His way straight towards Jerusalem. BEDE. Let then the Heathen cease to mock the Crucified, as if He were a man, who it is plain, as God, both foresaw the time of His crucifixion, and going voluntarily to be crucified, sought with stedfast face, that is, with resolute and undaunted mind, the spot where He was to be crucified. CYRIL. And He sends messengers to make a place for Him and His companions, who when they came to the country of the Samaritans were not admitted, as it follows, *And sent messengers before His face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for Him. And they did not receive Him.* AMBROSE. Mark that He was unwilling to be received by those who He knew had not turned to Him with a simple heart. For if He had wished, He might have made them devout, who were undevout. But God calls those whom He thinks worthy, and whom He wills He makes religious. But why

they did not receive Him the Evangelist mentions, saying, *Because His face was as if He would go to Jerusalem.* THEOPHYL. But if one understands that they did not receive Him for this reason, because He had determined to go to Jerusalem, an excuse is found for them, who did not receive Him. But we must say, that in the words of the Evangelist, *And they did not receive Him,* is implied that He did not go into Samaria, but afterwards as if some one had asked Him, He explained in these words, why they did not receive Him. And He went not to them, i.e. not that He was unable, but that He did not wish to go there, but rather to Jerusalem. BEDE. Or the Samaritans see that our Lord is going to Jerusalem, and do not receive Him. *For the Jews have no* John 4. 9. *dealings with the Samaritans,* as John shews.

CYRIL. But our Lord, who knew all things before they came to pass, knowing that His messengers would not be received by the Samaritans, nevertheless commanded them to go before Him, because it was His practice to make all things conduce to the good of His disciples. Now He went up to Jerusalem as the time of His suffering drew near. In order then that they might not be offended, when they saw Him suffer, bearing in mind that they must also endure patiently when men persecute them, He ordained beforehand as a kind of prelude this refusal of the Samaritans. It was good for them also in another way. For they were to be the teachers of the world, going through towns and villages, to preach the doctrine of the Gospel, meeting sometimes with men who would not receive the sacred doctrine, allowing not that Jesus sojourned on earth with them. He therefore taught them, that in announcing the divine doctrine, they ought to be filled with patience and meekness, without bitterness, and wrath, and fierce enmity against those who had done any wrong to them. But as yet they were not so, nay, being stirred up with fervid zeal, they wished to bring down fire from heaven upon them. It follows, *And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt Thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, &c.* AMBROSE. For they knew both that when Phineas had slain Numb. 25, 8. Ps. 107, 31. the idolaters it was counted to him for righteousness; and that at the prayer of Elijah fire came down from heaven, 2 Kings 1, 10. 12.

that the injuries of the prophet might be avenged. BEDE. For holy men who well knew that that death which detaches the soul from the body was not to be feared, still because of their feelings who feared it, punished some sins with death, that both the living might be struck with a wholesome dread, and those who were punished with death might receive harm not from death itself but from sin, which would be increased were they to live.

AMBROSE. But let him be avenged who fears. He who fears not, seeks not vengeance. At the same time the merits of the Prophets are likewise shewn to have been in the Apostles, seeing that they claim to themselves the right of obtaining the same power of which the Prophet was thought worthy; and fitly do they claim that at their command fire should come down from heaven, for they were the sons of thunder.

v. Theophyl. in loc.

TIT. BOST. They thought it much juster that the Samaritans should perish for not admitting our Lord, than the fifty soldiers who tried to thrust down Elijah. AMBROSE. But the Lord is not moved against them, that He might shew that perfect virtue has no feeling of revenge, nor is there any anger where there is fulness of love. For weakness must not be thrust out, but assisted. Let indignation be far from the religious, let the high-souled have no desire of vengeance. Hence it follows, *But He turned and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.* BEDE. The Lord blames them, not for following the example of the holy Prophet, but for their ignorance in taking vengeance while they were yet inexperienced, perceiving that they did not desire correction from love, but vengeance from hatred. After that He had taught them what it was to love their neighbour as themselves, and the Holy Ghost also had been infused into them, there were not lacking these punishments, though far less frequent than in the Old Testament, because *the Son of man came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them.* As if He said, And do you therefore who are sealed with His Spirit, imitate also His actions, now determining charitably, hereafter judging justly. AMBROSE. For we must not always punish the offender, since mercy sometimes does more good, leading thee to patience,

the sinner to repentance. Lastly, those Samaritans believed the sooner, who were in this place saved from fire.

57. And it came to pass, that as they went in the way, a certain man said unto Him, Lord, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest.

58. And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head.

59. And He said unto another, Follow Me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.

60. Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.

61. And another also said, Lord, I will follow Thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.

62. And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

CYRIL. Although the Almighty Lord is bountiful, He does not grant to every one absolutely and indiscriminately heavenly and divine gifts, but to those only who are worthy to receive them, who free themselves and their souls from the stains of wickedness. And this we are taught by the force of the angelic words, *And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto Him, Lord, I will follow Thee.* First indeed there is much tardiness implied in the manner of his coming. It is next shewn that he is filled with too great presumption. For he sought not to follow Christ simply as several others of the people, but rather caught at the honour of the Apostleship. Whereas Paul says, *No one taketh the honour to himself, but he that is called of God.* ATHAN. He dared also to match himself with the incomprehensible power of the Saviour, saying, *I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest;* for to follow the Saviour simply to hear His teaching is possible to human nature, as

Cyril. non occ.

Heb. 5, 4.

Athan. non occ.

it directs itself towards men, but it is not possible to go with Him wherever He is; for He is incomprehensible, and is not confined by place. CYRIL. In another respect also our Lord deservedly gives him a refusal, for He taught that to follow the Lord, a man must take up his cross, and renounce the affection of this present life. And our Lord, finding this lacking in him does not blame him, but corrects him.

It follows, *And Jesus says to him, The foxes have holes, &c.* THEOPHYL. For having seen our Lord drawing much people to Him, he thought that He received reward from them, and that if he followed our Lord, he might obtain money. BEDE. Therefore it is said to him, Why do you seek to follow Me for the riches and gain of this world, when so great is My poverty that I have not even a place of rest, and take shelter under another man's roof? CHRYS. See how our Lord sets forth by His works the poverty which He taught. For Him was no table spread, no lights, no house, nor any such thing.

CYRIL. Now under a mystical signification He applies the name of foxes and birds of the air to the wicked and crafty powers of evil spirits. As if He said, Since foxes and birds of the air have their abode in thee, how shall Christ rest in thee? *What fellowship has light with darkness?* (2 Cor. 6, 14.) ATHAN. Or herein our Lord teaches the greatness of His gift, as if He said, All created things may be confined by place, but the Word of God has incomprehensible power. Say not then, *I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest.* But if thou wouldest be a disciple, cast off[1] foolish things, for it is impossible for him who remains in foolishness to become a disciple of the Word. AMBROSE. Or, He compares foxes to heretics, because they are indeed a wily animal, and, ever intent upon fraud, commit their robberies by stealth. They let nothing be safe, nothing be at rest, nothing secure, for they hunt their prey into the very abodes of men. The fox again, an animal full of craft, makes no hole for itself, yet likes to lie always concealed in a hole. So the heretics, who know not how to construct a house for themselves, circumscribe and deceive others. This animal is never tamed, nor is it of use to man. Hence the Apostle, *A heretic after the first and second admonition reject.* (Tit. 3, 10.) But the birds of the

[1] ἀλόγα.

air, which are frequently brought in to represent spiritual wickedness, build as it were their nests in the breasts of the wicked, and as long as deceit reigns over the affections, the divine principle has no opportunity to take possession. But when a man has proved his heart to be innocent, upon him Christ leans in some measure the weight of His greatness, for by a more abundant shedding of grace He is planted in the breasts of good men. So then it does not seem reasonable that we should think him faithful and simple, who is rejected by the judgment of the Lord, notwithstanding that he promised the service of unwearied attendance; but our Lord cares not for this kind of service, but only purity of affection, nor is his attendance accepted whose sense of duty is not proved. For the hospitality of faith should be given with circumspection, lest while opening the interior of our house to the unbelieving, through our imprudent credulity we fall a snare to the treachery of others. Therefore that you may be aware that God despises not attendance upon Him but deceit, He who rejected the deceitful man chose the innocent. For it follows, *And He said unto another, Follow Me.* But He says this to him, whose father He knew to be dead. Hence it follows, *But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.* BEDE. He did not refuse the discipleship, but his wish was, having fulfilled the filial duty of burying his father, to follow Christ more freely.

AMBROSE. But the Lord calls those upon whom He has compassion. Hence it follows, *And Jesus said, Let the dead bury their dead.* Since we have received as a religious duty the burial of the human body, how is it thus that the burial even of a father's dead body is forbidden, unless you are to understand that human things are to be postponed to divine? It is a good employment, but the hindrance is greater, for he who divides his pursuits, draws down his affections; he who divides his care, delays his advances. We must first set about the things which are most important. For the Apostles also, that they might not be occupied in the office of distributing alms, ordained ministers for the poor. CHRYS. But what more necessary than the burial of his father; what more easy, seeing that there would not be much time given to it? We are then hereby taught that it be- Chrys. Hom. 27. in Matt.

comes us not to spend even the slightest portion of our time in vain, although we have a thousand things to compel us, nay to prefer spiritual things, to even our greatest necessities. For the devil watchfully presses close upon us, wishing to find any opening, and if he causes a slight negligence, he ends in producing a great weakness. AMBROSE. The performance of a father's burial is not then prohibited, but the observance of religious duty is preferred to the ties of relationship. The one is left to those in like condition, the other is commanded to those who are left. But how can the dead bury the dead? unless you here understand a two-fold death, one a natural death, the other the death of sin. There is also a third death, by which we die unto sin, live unto God.

Rom. 9, 11.

Chrys. ubi sup.

CHRYS. By thus saying *their dead*, He shews that this man's father was not His dead, for I suppose that the deceased was of the number of the unbelieving. AMBROSE. Or because the throat of the ungodly is an open sepulchre, their memory is ordered to be forgotten whose services die together with their bodies. Nor is the son recalled from his duty to his father, but the faithful is separated from the communion of the unbelieving; there is no prohibition of duty, but a mystery of religion, that is, that we should have no fellowship with the dead Gentiles. CYRIL. Or else, his father was borne down with years, and he thought he was doing an honourable act in proposing to pay the kind offices which were due to him, according to Exodus, *Honour thy father and thy mother*. Hence when calling him to the ministry of the Gospel, our Lord said, *Follow Me*, he sought for a time of respite, which should suffice for the support of his decrepit father, saying, *Permit me first to go and bury my father*, not that he asked to bury his deceased father, for Christ would not have hindered the wish to do this, but he said, *Bury*, that is, support in old age, even till death. But the Lord said to him, *Let the dead bury their dead*. For there were other attendants also bound by the same tie of relationship, but as I consider dead, because they had not yet believed Christ. Learn from this, that our duty to God is to be preferred to our love for our parents, to whom we shew reverence, because through them have we been born.

Exod. 20, 12.

But the God of all, when as yet we were not, brought us into being, our parents were made the ministers of our introduction. AUG. Our Lord spoke this to the man to whom He had said, *Follow Me.* But another disciple put himself forward, to whom no one had spoken any thing, saying, *I will follow Thee, O Lord; but let me first go and bid them farewell who are at home,* lest perchance they look for me as they are wont. CYRIL. Now this promise is worthy of our admiration and full of all praise, but to bid farewell to those who are at home, to get leave from them, shews that he was still somehow divided from the Lord, in that he had not yet resolved to make this venture with his whole heart. For to wish to consult relations who would not agree to his proposal betokens one somewhat wavering. Wherefore our Lord condemns this, saying, *No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.* He puts his hand to the plongh who is ambitious to follow, yet looks back again who seeks an excuse for delay in returning home and consulting with his friends. AUG. As if He said to him, The East calls thee, and thou turnest to the West. BEDE. To put one's hand to the plough, is also, (as it were by a certain sharp instrument,) by the wood and iron of our Lord's passion, to wear away the hardness of our heart, and to open it to bring forth the fruits of good works. But if any one, having begun to exercise this, delights to look back with Lot's wife to the things which he had left, he is deprived of the gift of the kingdom to come. GREEK Ex. For the frequent looking upon the things which we have forsaken, through the force of habit draws us back to our past way of life. For practice has great power to retain to itself. Is not habit generated of use, and nature of habit? But to get rid of or change nature is difficult; for although when compelled it for a while turns aside, it very rapidly returns to itself.

Aug. de Con. Ev. l. ii. c. 23.

Aug. Serm. 100.

Nilus Monac.

BEDE. But if the disciple about to follow our Lord is reproved for wishing even to bid farewell at home, what will be done to such as for no advantage-sake frequently visit the houses of those whom they have left in the world?

CHAP. X.

1. After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before His face into every city and place, whither He Himself would come.

2. Therefore said He unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He would send forth labourers into His harvest.

Cyril. God had made known by the Prophets that the preaching of the Gospel of salvation was to embrace not only Israel, but also the Gentile nations; and therefore after the twelve Apostles, there were other seventy-two also appointed by Christ, as it is said, *After these things the Lord appointed other seventy-two also.* Bede. Rightly are seventy-two sent, for to so many nations of the world was the Gospel to be preached, that as at first twelve were appointed because of the twelve tribes of Israel, so, these also were ordained as teachers for the instruction of the foreign nations. Aug. As also in twenty-four hours the whole world moves round and receives light, so the mystery of enlightening the world by the Gospel of the Trinity, is hinted at in the seventy-two disciples. For three times twenty-four make seventy-two. Now as no one doubts that the twelve Apostles foreshadowed the order of Bishops, so also we must know that these seventy-two represented the presbytery, (that is, the second order of priests.) Nevertheless, in the earliest times of the Church, as the Apostolical writings bear witness, both were called presbyters, both also called bishops, the former of these signifying "ripeness of wisdom," the latter, "diligence

Vulg. septuaginta duos.

Aug. de Quæst. Ev. l. ii. q. 14.

in the pastoral care." CYRIL. An outline of this ordinance also was set forth in the words of Moses, who at the command of God chose out seventy, upon whom God poured out His Spirit. In the book of Numbers also it was written of the children of Israel, that they came to Elim, which is by interpretation "ascent," and there were there twelve fountains of water, and seventy palm-trees. For when we fly to spiritual refreshment, we shall find twelve fountains, namely, the holy Apostles, from whom we imbibe the knowledge of salvation as from the well-springs of the Saviour; and seventy palms, that is, those who were now appointed by Christ. For the palm is a tree of sound core, striking deep root and fruitful, always growing by the water side, yet at the same time putting forth its leaves upwards. Numb. 33, 9. Isa. 12, 3.

It follows, *And He sent them two and two.* GREG. He sends the disciples to preach two and two, because there are two commands of charity, the love of God, and love of our neighbour; (and charity cannot exist without at least two;) thereby silently suggesting to us, that he who has not love to another, ought not to undertake the office of preaching. ORIGEN. Likewise also the twelve were reckoned by two and two, as Matthew shews in his enumeration of them. For that two should be joined in service, seems from the word of God to be an ancient custom. For God led Israel out of Egypt by the hands of Moses and Aaron. Joshua and Caleb also, united together, appeased the people who had been provoked by the twelve spies. Hence it is said, *A brother assisted by a brother is as a fortified city.* Greg. Hom. 17. in Ev. Matt. 10, 2. Numb. 13, 14. Ex. 12. Prov. 18, 19. Vulg.

BASIL. At the same time it is implied by this, that if any are equal in spiritual gifts, they should not suffer a fondness for their own opinion to get the better of them. GREG. It is rightly added, *before His face into every city and place, whither He Himself would come.* For the Lord follows His preachers, since the preaching comes first, and then the Lord enters into the tabernacle of our heart; seeing that through the words of exhortation going before, truth is received into the mind. Hence Esaias says to the preachers, *Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight a highway for our God.* THEOPHYL. The Lord had appointed the disciples for the sake of the multitude, who were in want Greg. ubi sup. Isa. 40, 3.

of teachers. For as our corn-fields require many reapers, so the innumerable company of those who are to believe need many teachers, as it follows, *The harvest truly is great.* CHRYS. But how does He give the name of harvest to a work only just now at its beginning? the plough not yet put down, nor the furrows turned, He yet speaks of harvests, for his disciples might waver and say, How can we so small a number convert the whole world, how can foolish men reform the wise, naked men those that are armed, subjects their rulers? Lest they should be disturbed then by such thoughts, He calls the Gospel a harvest; as if He says, *All things are ready, I send you to a gathering of fruits already prepared.* Ye can sow and reap the same day. As then the husbandman goes out to harvest rejoicing, much more also and with greater cheerfulness must you go out into the world. For this is the true harvest, which shews the fields all prepared for you. GREG. But not without deep sorrow can we add, *but the labourers are few.* For although there are who would hear good things, they are wanting who should spread them. Behold the world is full of priests, but seldom is there found a labourer in God's harvest, because we undertake indeed the priestly office, but we perform not its works. BEDE. Now as the great harvest is this whole multitude of believers, so the few labourers are the Apostles, and their followers who are sent to this harvest.

Greg. ubi sup.

CYRIL. As the large fields require many reapers, so also do the multitude of believers in Christ. Hence He adds, *Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He would send forth labourers into His harvest.* Now mark that when He said, *Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He would send forth labourers into the harvest,* He afterwards Himself performed it. He then is the Lord of the harvest, and by Him, and together with Him, God the Father rules over all. CHRYS. But He afterwards increased them greatly, not by adding to their number, but awarding to them power. He implies that it is a great gift to send labourers into the divine harvest, by His saying that the Lord of the harvest must be prayed to upon this account. GREG. Hereby also the people must be induced to pray for their pastors, that they may be able to work what is good for them, and that

Cyril. non occ. v. Tit. Bost.

Chrys. Hom. 32. in Matt.

Greg. ubi sup.

their tongue grow not lifeless in exhortation. For often for their own wickedness their tongue is tied. But often for the fault of the people it comes to pass that the word of preaching is withdrawn from their rulers.

3. Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves.

4. Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes: and salute no man by the way.

CYRIL. Luke next relates, that the seventy disciples obtained for themselves from Christ apostolical learning, lowliness, innocency, justice, and to prefer no worldly things to holy preachings, but to aspire to such fortitude of mind as to be afraid of no terrors, not even death itself. He adds therefore, *Go*. CHRYS. For their comfort amid every danger was the power of Him who sent them. And therefore saith He, *Behold, I send you;* as if He said, This will suffice for your consolation, this will be enough to make you hope, instead of fearing the coming evils which He signifies, adding, *as lambs among wolves.* Chrys. Hom. 33. in Matt.

ISIDORE. Denoting the simplicity and innocence in His disciples. For those who were riotous, and by their enormities did despite to their nature, He calls not lambs, but goats. Isid. Peleus l. i. ep. 438.

AMBROSE. Now these animals are at variance among themselves, so that the one is devoured by the other, the lambs by the wolves; but the good Shepherd has no fear of wolves for His flock. And therefore the disciples are appointed not to make prey, but to impart grace. For the watchfulness of the good Shepherd causes the wolves to attempt nothing against the lambs; He sends them as lambs amid wolves that that prophecy might be fulfilled, *The wolf and the lamb shall feed together.* CHRYS. For this was a clear announcement of glorious triumph, that the disciples of Christ, when surrounded by their enemies as lambs among wolves, should still convert them. BEDE. Or He especially gives the name of wolves to the Scribes and Pharisees, who are the Jewish clergy. AMBROSE. Or the heretics are compared to wolves. For wolves are beasts who lie in wait near the sheep-folds, Isaiah 65, 25. Chrys. Hom. 33 in Matt.

and prowl about the shepherds' cottages. They dare not enter the abodes of men, they pry out sleeping dogs, absent or slothful shepherds; they seize the sheep by the throat, that they may quickly strangle them; ravenous beasts, with bodies so stiff that they cannot easily turn themselves, but are carried along by their own impetus, and so are often deceived. If they are the first to see a man, it is said, they by a certain natural impulse, tear out his voice; but if a man first sees them, they quake with fear. In like manner the heretics lurk about Christ's sheep-folds, howl near the cottages at night time. For night is the time for the treacherous who obscure the light of Christ with the mists of false interpretation. The inns of Christ, however, they dare not enter, and therefore are not healed, as he was in an inn who fell among thieves. They look out for the shepherds' absence, for they cannot attack the sheep when the shepherds are by. Owing also to the inflexibility of a hard and obstinate mind, they seldom if ever turn from their error, while Christ the true interpreter of Scripture mocks them, so that they vent forth their violence in vain, and are not able to hurt; and if they overtake any one by the subtle trickery of their disputations, they make him dumb. For he is dumb who confesses not the word of God with the glory which belongs to it. Beware then lest the heretic deprive you of your voice, and lest you detect him not first. For he is creeping on while his treachery is disguised. But if you have discovered his unholy desires, you cannot fear the loss of a holy voice. They attack the throat, they wound the vitals while they seek the soul. If also you hear any one called a priest and you know his robberies, outwardly he is a sheep, inwardly a wolf, who is longing to gratify his rage with the insatiable cruelty of human murder.

Greg. Hom. 17. in Ev.

Greg. For many when they receive the right of rule, are vehement in persecuting their subjects, and manifesting the terrors of their power. And since they have no bowels of mercy, their desire is to seem to be masters, forgetting altogether that they are fathers, changing an occasion for humility, into an exaltation of power. We must on the other hand consider, that as lambs are sent among wolves because they preserve the feeling of innocence, so we should make no

malicious attacks. For he who undertakes the office of preacher ought not to bring evils upon others, but to endure them; who although at times an upright zeal demands that he should deal harshly with his subjects, should still inwardly in his heart love with a fatherly feeling those whom outwardly he visits with censure. And that ruler gives a good example of this, who never submits the neck of his soul to the yoke of earthly desire. Hence it is added, *Carry neither purse nor scrip.* GREG. NAZ. The sum of which is, that men ought to be so virtuous that the Gospel should make no less progress through their way of life than their preaching. GREG. For the preacher (of the Gospel) ought to have such trust in God, that although he has provided not for the expenses of this present life, he should still be most certainly convinced that these will not fail him; lest while his mind is engaged in his temporal things, he should be less careful for the spiritual things of others.

Greg. Orat. 2.

Greg. Hom. 17. in Ev.

CYRIL. Thus He had already commanded them to have no care for their persons, when He said, *I send you as lambs among wolves.* And He also forbade all care about what is external to the body, by saying, *Take neither purse nor scrip.* Nor did He allow men to take with them any of those things which were not attached to the body. Hence He adds, *Nor shoes.* He not only forbade them to take purse and scrip, but He did not allow them to receive any distraction in their work, such as interruption by greetings on their way. Hence He adds, *Salute no one by the way.* Which had long ago been said by Elisha. As if He said, Proceed straight on to your work without exchanging blessings with others. For it is a loss to waste the time which is fitter for preaching, in unnecessary things. AMBROSE. Our Lord did not then forbid these things because the exercise of benevolence was displeasing to Him, but because the motive of following after devotedness was more pleasing. GREG. NAZ. The Lord gave them these commands also for the glory of the word, lest it should seem that enticements could more prevail over them. He wished them also not to be anxious to speak to others.

2 Kings 4, 29.

Greg. ubi sup.

GREG. If any one would have these words taken also allegorically, the money shut up in a purse is the hidden

Greg. ubi sup.

wisdom. He then who has the word of wisdom, and neglects to employ it for his neighbour, is like one who keeps his money tied up in his purse. But by the scrip is meant the troubles of the world, by the shoes (made of the skins of dead animals) are signified the examples of dead works. He then who undertakes the office of preacher ought not to bear the burden of business, lest while this presses down his neck he should not rise to the preaching of heavenly things; nor ought he to behold the example of foolish works, lest he think to shield his own works as by dead skins, that is, lest because he observes that others have done these things, he imagine that he also is at liberty to do the same. AMBROSE. Our Lord also would have nothing human in us. For Moses
Exod. 3, 5. is bid to loose off the human and earthly shoe when he was
Exod. 12, 11. sent to deliver the people. But if any one is perplexed why in Egypt we are ordered to eat the lamb with shoes on, but the Apostles are appointed to preach the Gospel without shoes: he must consider, that one in Egypt ought still to beware of the serpent's bite, for there were many poisonous creatures in Egypt. And he who celebrates the Passover in figure may be exposed to the wound, but the minister of truth fears no poison.

Greg. ubi sup. GREG. Now every one who salutes on the way does so from the accident of the journey, not for the sake of wishing health. He then who not from love of a heavenly country, but from seeking reward, preaches salvation to his hearers, does as it were salute on the journey, since accidentally, not from any fixed intention, he desires the salvation of his hearers.

5. And into whatever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house.

6. And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again.

7. And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give; for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house.

8. And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you:

9. And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.

10. But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say,

11. Even the very dust of your city which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.

12. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city.

CHRYS. Peace is the mother of all good things, without it all other things are vain. Our Lord therefore commanded His disciples on entering a house first to pronounce peace as a sign of good things, saying, *Into whatever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house.* AMBROSE. That in truth we should convey the message of peace, and that our very first entrance be attended with the blessing of peace. CHRYS. And hence he who presides in the Church gives it, saying, *Peace unto all.* Now holy men ask for peace, not only that which dwells among men in mutual intercourse, but that which belongs to ourselves. For oftentimes we wage war in our hearts, and are disturbed even when no one troubles us; bad desires also frequently rise up against us. TIT. BOS. But it is said, *Peace be to this house,* that is, to them that dwell in the house. As if He says, I speak unto all, both the greater and the less, yet should not your salutation be addressed to them that are unworthy of it. Hence it is added, *And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it.* As if He says, You indeed shall utter the word, but the blessing of peace shall be applied wherever I shall deem men worthy of it. But if any one is not worthy, ye are not mocked, the grace of your word has not perished, but is returned unto you. And this is what is added, *But if not, it shall return unto you again.* GREG. For the peace which is offered by the mouth of the preacher shall either rest on the house, if

Chrys. Hom. 35. in Matt.

Chrys. Hom. 32. in Matt.

Orat. cont. Jud. 3.

Greg. Hom. 17. in Ev.

there be any one in it predestined to life, who follows the heavenly word which he hears; or if no one be willing indeed to hear, the preacher himself shall not be without fruit, for the peace returns to him, while the Lord gives him the recompense of reward for the labour of his work. But if our peace is received, it is meet that we should obtain earthly supplies from those to whom we offer the rewards of a heavenly country. Hence it follows: *And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give.* Mark, that He who forbade them to carry purse and scrip, allows them to be an expense to others, and to receive sustenance from preaching. Chrys. But lest any one should say, I am spending my own property in preparing a table for strangers, He first makes them offer the gift of peace, to which nothing is equal, that you may know that you receive greater things than you give. Tit. Bost. Or else; Since you are not appointed judges as to who are worthy and who are unworthy, eat and drink what things they offer to you. But leave to Me the trial of those who receive you, unless you happen also to know that the son of peace is not there, for perhaps in that case you ought to depart.

Chrys. ubi sup.

Theophyl. See then how He taught His disciples to beg, and wished them to receive their nourishment as a reward. For it is added, *For the labourer is worthy of his hire.* Greg. For now the very food which supports him is part of the wages of the labourer, as in this life the hire commences with the labour of preaching, which in the next is completed with the sight of truth. And here we must consider that two rewards are due to one work of ours, one on the journey, which supports us in labour, the other in our country, which recompenses us at the resurrection. Therefore the reward which we receive now ought so to work in us, that we the more vigorously strive to gain the succeeding reward. Every true preacher then ought not so to preach, that he may receive a reward at the present time, but so to receive a reward that he may have strength to preach. For whoever so preaches that here he may receive the reward of praise, or riches, deprives himself of an eternal reward.

ubi sup.

Ambrose. Another virtue is added, that we should not go about easily, changing from house to house. For it fol-

lows, *Go not from house to house;* that is, that we should preserve a consistency in our love towards our hosts, nor lightly loose any bond of friendship.

BEDE. Now having described the reception from different houses, He teaches them what they ought to do in the cities; namely, to have intercourse with the good in all, but to keep from the society of the wicked in every thing; as it follows, *But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you.* THEOPHYL. Although they be few and poor, ask for nothing more; He also tells them to work miracles, and their word shall draw men to their preaching. Hence He adds, *And heal the sick that are therein, and say to them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.* For if you first heal and then teach, the word will prosper, and men believe that the kingdom of God is come nigh. For they would not be cured unless by the working of some divine power. But also when they are healed in their soul, the kingdom of God comes nigh unto them, for it is far off from him over whom sin has the dominion. CHRYS. Now mark the excellence of the Apostles. They are bid to utter nothing relating to sensible things, such as Moses and the Prophets spoke of, namely, earthly goods, but certain new and marvellous things, namely, *the kingdom of God.* MAX. Which it is said *is come nigh,* not to shew the shortness of time, for the kingdom of God cometh not with observation, but to mark the disposition of men towards the kingdom of God, which is indeed potentially in all believers, but actually in those who reject the life of the body, and choose only the spiritual life; who are able to say, *Now I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.*

Chrys. Hom. 32. in Matt.

Max. Cap. Theol. 191.

Gal. 2, 20.

AMBROSE. He next teaches them to shake off the dust from their feet when the men of a city have refused to entertain them, saying, *Into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, shake off the dust.* BEDE. Either as a testimony to the earthly toil which they had in vain undergone for them, or to shew that so far from seeking any thing earthly from them, they suffer not even the dust from their land to cleave to them. Or by the feet is meant the very labour and walking to and fro of preaching; but the dust

with which they are sprinkled is the lightness of worldly thoughts, from which even the greatest teachers cannot be free. Those then who have despised the teaching, turn the labours and dangers of the teachers into a testimony of their condemnation. ORIGEN. By wiping off the dust of their feet against them, they in some sort say, The dust of your sins shall deservedly come upon you. And mark that the cities which receive not the Apostles and sound doctrine have
Matt.7,13. streets, according to Matthew, *Broad is the way which leadeth to destruction.* THEOPHYL. And as they who receive the Apostles are said to have the kingdom of God come nigh unto them as a blessing, so those who do not receive them are said to have it nigh unto them as a curse. Hence He adds, *Notwithstanding, be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you,* as the coming of a king is to some for punishment, but to some for honour. Hence it is added respecting their punishment, *But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom, &c.* EUSEB.
Gen. 19. For in the city of Sodom Angels were not without entertainment, but Lot was found worthy to receive them into his house. If then at the coming of the disciples into a city there shall not be found one to receive them, will not that city be worse than Sodom? These words persuaded them to attempt boldly the rule of poverty. For there could not be a city or village without some inhabitants acceptable to God. For Sodom could not exist without a Lot found in it, at whose departure the whole was suddenly destroyed. BEDE. The men of Sodom, although they were hospitable in the midst of all their wickedness of soul and body, yet were there no such guests found among them as the Apostles. Lot indeed was righteous both in seeing and hearing, yet he is not said to have taught or worked miracles.

13. Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.

14. But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment, than for you.

15. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell.

16. He that heareth you heareth Me; and he that despiseth you despiseth Me; and he that despiseth Me despiseth Him that sent Me.

AMBROSE. Our Lord warns us that they will meet with a heavier punishment who have refused to follow the Gospel than those who have chosen to break the law; saying, *Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida!* BEDE. Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, Tiberias also which John mentions, are cities of Galilee situated on the shore of the lake of Gennesaret, which is called by the Evangelists the sea of Galilee or Tiberias. Our Lord thus mourns over these cities which after such great miracles and wonders repented not, and are worse than the Gentiles who break through the law of nature only, seeing that after despising the written law, they feared not to despise also the Son of God and His glory. Hence it follows, *For if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented sitting in sackcloth and ashes, &c.* By sackcloth, which is woven together from the hairs of goats, He signifies a sharp remembrance of previous sin. But by ashes, He hints at the consideration of death, by which we are reduced to dust. Again, by the *sitting down,* He implies the lowliness of our conscience. Now we have seen in this day the word of the Saviour fulfilled, since Chorazin and Bethsaida, though our Lord was present among them, believed not, and Tyre and Sidon were friendly both to David and Solomon, and afterwards believed in the disciples of Christ who preached the Gospel there. 1 Kings 5.

CHRYS. Our Lord mourns over these cities for our example, because shedding tears and bitter lamentations over those who are insensible to grief, is no slight antidote, tending both to the correction of the insensible, and to the remedy and consolation of those who mourn over them. Again, He draws them over to what is good, not only by Chrys. Hom. 38. in Matt.

lamenting over them, but also by alarming them. Hence it follows, *But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, &c.* This we ought also to listen to. For not upon them alone, but upon us also, He hath passed sentence, if we receive not the guests who come to us, since He commanded them to shake off the very dust from their feet. And in another place: Now when our Lord had done many mighty works in Capernaum, and had Himself dwelt there, it seemed to be exalted above the other cities, but through unbelief fell to destruction. Hence it follows, *And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shall be thrust down to hell;* that, in fact, the judgment might be in proportion to the honour. BEDE. This sentence admits of two meanings: Either for this reason shalt thou be thrust down into hell, because thou proudly resisted My preaching; that in truth she might be understood to have raised herself up to heaven by her pride. Or, because thou art exalted to heaven by My dwelling in thee, and by My miracles, shalt thou be beaten with more stripes, since even these thou refusedst to believe. And that no one should suppose that this interpretation applied only either to the cities or the persons who, seeing our Lord in the flesh despised Him, and not to all also who now despise the words of the Gospel, He proceeds to add these words, *He that heareth you, heareth Me.* CYRIL. Whereby He teaches, that whatever is said by the holy Apostles must be received, since he who heareth them heareth Christ, and an inevitable punishment therefore hangs over heretics who neglect the words of the Apostles; for it follows, *and he who despises you despises Me.* BEDE. That is, that every one indeed on hearing or despising the preaching of the Gospel might learn that he is not despising or hearing the mere individual preacher, but our Lord and Saviour, nay the Father Himself; for it follows, *And he that despiseth Me, despiseth Him that sent Me.* For the Master is heard in His disciple, the Father honoured in His Son. AUG. But if the word of God reaches to us also, and appoints us in the Apostles' place, beware of despising us, lest that reach unto Him which you have done unto us. BEDE. It may also be understood as follows, *He who despiseth you, despiseth Me,* that is, he who shews not mercy

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to one of the least of My brethren, neither shews it to Me. But *he who despiseth Me,* (refusing to believe on the Son of God,) *despiseth Him that sent Me. For I and My Father are one.* TIT. BOST. But at the same time He herein consoles His disciples, as if He said, Say not why are we about to suffer reproach. Let your speech be with moderation. I give you grace, upon Me your reproaches fall. Matt. 25, 40. John 10, 30.

17. And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through Thy name.

18. And He said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.

19. Behold I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

20. Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.

CYRIL. It was said above that our Lord sent forth His disciples sealed with the grace of the Holy Spirit, and that being made ministers of preaching, they received power over the unclean spirits. But now when they returned, they confess the power of Him who honoured them, as it is said, *And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us, &c.* They seemed indeed to rejoice rather that they were made workers of miracles, than that they had become ministers of preaching. But they had better have rejoiced in those whom they had taken, as St. Paul says to them that were called by him, *My joy and my crown.* Phil. 4, 1.

GREG. Now our Lord, in a remarkable manner, in order to put down high thoughts in the hearts of His disciples, Himself related the account of the fall which the teacher of pride suffered; that they might learn by the example of the author of pride, what they would have to dread from the sin of pride. Hence it follows *I beheld Satan as lightning fall* Greg. 23. Mor. c. 4.

Basil. Hom. Quod Deus non est auctor mali.

from heaven. BASIL. He is called Satan, because he is an enemy to God, (for this the Hebrew word signifies,) but he is called the Devil, because he assists us in doing evil, and is an accuser. His nature is incorporeal, his abode in the air.

BEDE. He says not, 'I see now,' but referring to past time, *I saw*, when he fell. But by the words *as lightning*, He signifies either a fall headlong from the high places to the lowest, or that now cast down, he transforms himself into an angel of light. TIT. BOST. Now He says, that He saw it, as being Judge, for He knew the sufferings of the spirits. Or He says, *as lightning*, because by nature Satan shone as lightning, but became darkness through his affections, since what God made good he changed in himself to evil. BASIL. For the heavenly Powers are not naturally holy, but according to the analogy of divine love they receive their measure of sanctification. And as iron placed in the fire does not cease to be iron, though by the violent application of the flame, both in effect and appearance, it passes into fire; so also the Powers on high, from their participation in that which is naturally holy, have a holiness implanted in them. For Satan had not fallen, if by nature he had been unsusceptible of evil.

2 Cor. 11, 14.

Basil. adv. Eunom. l. 3.

CYRIL. Or else, *I saw Satan as lightning fall from heaven*, that is, from the highest power to the lowest impotence. For before the coming of our Saviour, he had subdued the world to him, and was worshipped by all men. But when the only-begotten Word of God came down from heaven, he fell as lightning, seeing that he is trodden under foot by those who worship Christ. As it follows, *And, behold, I give unto you power to tread upon serpents, &c.*

TIT. BOST. Serpents indeed at one time under a figure were made to bite the Jews, and kill them because of their unbelief. But there came One who should destroy those serpents; even the Brazen Serpent, the Crucified, so that if any one should look on Him believing, he might be healed from his wounds and saved. CHRYS. Then lest we should suppose this was spoken of beasts, He added, *And over all the power of the enemy.* BEDE. That is, I give you the power of casting out every kind of unclean spirit, from the bodies possessed. And as far as regards themselves, He

Numb. 21, 8.

adds, *And nothing shall hurt you.* Although it might also be taken literally. For Paul when attacked by a viper suffered no injury. John having drunk poison is not harmed by it[a]. But I think there is this difference between serpents who bite with the teeth, and scorpions who sting with the tail, that the serpents signify men or spirits raging openly, scorpions signify them plotting in secret. Or serpents are those which cast the poison of evil persuasion upon virtues just beginning, scorpions which go about to corrupt at last virtues which have been brought to perfection. THEOPHYL. Or serpents are those which visibly hurt, as the evil spirit of adultery and murder. But those are called scorpions which invisibly injure, as in the sins of the spirit. GREG. NYSS. For pleasure is called in Scripture a serpent, which by nature is such that if its head has reached a wall so as to press upon it, it drags its whole body after it. So nature has given man the habitation which was necessary for him. But by means of this necessity, pleasure assaults the heart, and perverts it to the indulgence of immoderate ornament; in addition to this it brings in its train covetousness, which is followed by lust, that is, the last member or tail of the beast. But as it is not possible to draw back the serpent by its tail, so to remove pleasure we must not begin with the last, unless one has closed the first entrance to evil.

Acts 28, 5.

Greg. Hom. in Cant.

ATHAN. But now through the power of Christ boys make a mock at pleasure, which formerly led away the aged, and virgins stedfastly trample upon the desires of serpentine pleasure. Some also tread upon the very sting of the scorpion, that is, of the devil, namely death, and fearing not destruction, become witnesses of the word. But many giving up earthly things walk with a free step in heaven, dreading not the prince of the air.

Athan. Orat. in Pass. et cruce Domini

TIT. BOST. But because the joy with which He saw them rejoice savoured of vain-glory, for they rejoiced that they were as it were exalted, and were a terror to men and evil spirits, our Lord therefore adds, *Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you, &c.* BEDE. They are forbidden to rejoice in the subjection of the spirits

[a] See Isidore de Vit. et Morte Sanct. § 73.

to God, since they were flesh; for to cast out spirits and to exercise other powers is sometimes not on account of his merit who works, but is wrought through the invocation of Christ's name to the condemnation of those who mock it, or to the advantage of those who see and hear. CYRIL. Why, O Lord, dost not Thou permit men to rejoice in the
Ps. 89, 16. honours which are conferred by Thee, since it is written, *In Thy name shall they rejoice all the day?* But the Lord raises them up by greater joys. Hence He adds, *But rejoice that your names are written in heaven.* BEDE. As if He said, It becomes you to rejoice not in the putting down of the evil spirits, but in your own exaltation. But it would be well for us to understand, that whether a man has done heavenly or earthly works, he is thereby, as if marked down by letter, for ever fixed in the memory of God. THEOPHYL. For the names of the saints are written in the book of life not in ink, but in the memory and grace of God. And the devil indeed fell from above; but men being below have their names in-
Basil. in Esai. 4. scribed above in heaven. BASIL. There are some who are
Jer. 17, 13. written indeed not in life, but according to Jeremiah in the earth, that in this way there might be a kind of double enrolment, of the one indeed to life, but of the other to
Ps. 69, 28. destruction. But since it is said, *Let them be blotted out of the book of the living,* this is spoken of those who were thought worthy to be written in the book of God. And in this way a name is said to be put down in writing or blotted out, when we turn aside from virtue to sin, or the contrary.

21. In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in Thy sight.

22. All things are delivered to Me of My Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him.

THEOPHYL. As a loving father rejoices to see his sons do

right, so Christ also rejoices that His Apostles were made worthy of such good things. Hence it follows, *In that hour, &c.* CYRIL. He saw in truth that through the operation of the Holy Spirit, which He gave to the holy Apostles, the acquisition of many would be made, (or that many would be brought to the faith.) He is said therefore to have rejoiced in the Holy Spirit, that is, in the results which came forth through the Holy Spirit. For as one who loved mankind He considered the conversion of sinners to be a subject for rejoicing, for which He gives thanks. As it follows, *I give thanks unto Thee, O Father.* BEDE. confiteor
Confessing does not always signify penitence, but also Ps. 18, 49; 30, 12; 52, 9
thanksgiving, as is frequently found in the Psalms.

CYRIL. Now here, say they whose hearts are perverted, the Son gives thanks to the Father as being inferior. But what should prevent the Son of the same substance with the Father from praising His own Father, who saves the world by Him? But if you think that because of His giving thanks He shews Himself to be inferior, observe, that He calls Him His Father, and the Lord of heaven and earth. TIT. BOST. For all other things have been produced by Christ non occ
from nothing, but He alone was incomprehensibly begotten of His Father; Who therefore of the Only-begotten alone, as a true Son, is by nature the Father. Hence He alone says to His Father, *I give thanks to Thee, O Father, Lord, &c.*, that is, I glorify Thee. Marvel not that the Son glorifies the Father. For the whole substance of the Only-begotten is the glory of the Father. For both those things which were created, and the Angels, are the glory of the Creator. But since these are placed too low in respect of His dignity, the Son alone, since He is perfect God like His Father, perfectly glorifies His Father. ATHAN. We know also that the Athan. con. Greg Sabell. 3. con. gentes 6.
Saviour often speaks as man. For His divine nature has human nature joined to it, yet you would not, because of His clothing Himself with a body, be ignorant that He was God. But what do they answer to this, who wish to make out a substance of evil, but form to themselves another God, other than the true Father of Christ? And they say that he is unbegotten, the creator of evil and prince of iniquity, as well as the maker of the world's fabric. Now our Lord, Gen. 1, 1.

affirming the word of Moses, says, *I give thanks unto Thee,* Epiph. adv. Hær. 42. *Father, Lord of heaven and earth.* EPIPH. But a Gospel composed by Marcion has, "I give thanks to Thee, O Lord," being silent as to the words *of heaven and earth,* and the word *Father,* lest it should be supposed that He calls the Father the Creator of the heaven and the earth.

AMBROSE. Lastly, He unveils the heavenly mystery by which it pleased God to reveal His grace, rather to the little ones than the wise of the world. Hence it follows, *That Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent.* THEOPHYL. The distinction may be, that it is said, *the wise,* meaning, the Pharisees and Scribes who interpret the law, *and the prudent,* meaning those who were taught by the Scribes, for the wise man is he who teaches, but the prudent man he who is taught; but the Lord calls His disciples *babes,* whom He chose not from the teachers of the law, but out of the multitude, and by calling, fishermen; babes, that is, as devoid of malice. AMBROSE. Or by a babe we should here understand one who knew nothing of exalting himself, and of boasting in proud words of the excellence of his wisdom, as the Pharisees often do. BEDE. He therefore gives thanks that He had revealed to the Apostles as unto babes the sacraments of His coming, of which the Scribes and Pharisees were ignorant, who think themselves wise, and are prudent in their own sight. THEOPHYL. The mysteries then were hid from those who think themselves wise, and are not; for if they had been, these would have been revealed to them. BEDE. To the wise and prudent then He opposed not the dull and foolish, but babes; that is, the humble, to shew that He condemned pride, not quickness of mind. ORIGEN. For a feeling of deficiency is the preparation for coming perfection. For whoever by the presence of the apparent good perceives not that he is destitute of the true good, is deprived of the true good.

Chrys. Hom. 38. in Matt. CHRYS. Now He does not rejoice and give thanks because the mysteries of God were hid from the Scribes and Pharisees, (for this were not a subject of rejoicing, but of lament,) but for this cause gives He thanks, that what the wise knew not, babes knew. But moreover He gives thanks to the Father, together with whom He Himself does this, to shew

the great love wherewith He loves us. He explains in the next place, that the cause of this thing was first His own will and the Father's, who of His own will did this. As it follows, *Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in Thy sight.* GREG. We receive these words as an example of humility, that we should not rashly presume to scan the heavenly counsel, concerning the calling of some, and the rejection of others; for that cannot be unjust which seemed good to the Just One. In all things therefore, externally disposed, the cause of the visible system is the justice of the hidden will. Greg. 25. Moral. c. 14.

CHRYS. But after He had said, *I thank Thee that Thou hast revealed them to babes,* lest you should suppose that Christ was destitute of the power to do this, He adds, *All things are delivered to Me of My Father.* ATHAN. The followers of Arius, not rightly understanding this, rave against our Lord, saying, *If all things were given to Him,* that is, the dominion of the creatures, there was a time when He had them not, and so was not of the substance of the Father. For if He had been, there would be no need for Him to receive. But hereby is their madness the rather detected. For if before He had received them, the creature was independent of the Word, how will that verse stand, *In Him all things consist?* But if as soon as the creatures were made, they were all given to Him, where was the need to give, for *by Him were all things made?* The dominion of the creation is not then, as they think, here meant, but the words signify the dispensation made in the flesh. For after that man sinned, all things were confounded; the Word then was made flesh, that He might restore all things. All things therefore were given Him, not because He was wanting in power, but that as Saviour He should repair all things; that as by the Word all things at the beginning were brought into being, so when the Word was made flesh, He should restore all things in Himself. BEDE. Or by the words, *All things are delivered to Me,* He means not the elements of the world, but those babes to whom by the Spirit the Father made known the Sacraments of His Son; and in whose salvation when He here spoke He was rejoicing. AMBROSE. Or, when you read *all things,* you acknowledge the Almighty, not the Son lower than the Father; when you read *de-*

Chrys. Hom. 38. in Matt. Athan. Tract. in Matt. 11, 22. Col. 4, 17. John 13.

livered, you confess the Son, to whom by the nature of one substance all things rightly belong, not conferred as a gift by grace. CYRIL. Now having said that all things were given Him by His Father, He rises to His own glory and excellence, shewing that in nothing He is surpassed by His Father. Hence He adds, *And no one knoweth who the Son is but the Father, &c.* For the mind of the creatures is not able to comprehend the manner of the Divine substance, which passes all understanding, and His glory transcends our highest contemplations. By Itself only is known what the Divine nature is. Therefore the Father, by that which He is, knoweth the Son; the Son, by that which He is, knoweth the Father, no difference intervening as regards the Divine nature. And in another place. For that God is, we believe, but what He is by nature, is incomprehensible. But if the Son was created, how could He alone know the Father, or how could He be known only by the Father. For to know the Divine nature is impossible to any creature, but to know each created thing what it is, does not surpass every understanding, though it is far be-
Athan. Orat. 1. cont. Arian. yond our senses. ATHAN. But though our Lord says this, it is plain that the Arians object to Him, saying, that the Father is not seen by the Son. But their folly is manifest, as if the Word did not know Itself which reveals to all men the knowledge of the Father and Itself; for it follows, *And to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him.* TIT. BOST. Now a revelation is the communication of knowledge in proportion to each man's nature and capacity; and when indeed the nature is congenial, there is knowledge without teach-
Orig. non occ. ing; but here the instruction is by revelation. ORIGEN. He wishes to reveal as the Word, not without the exercise of reason: and as Justice, who knoweth rightly both the times for revealing, and the measures of revelation; but He re-
2 Cor. 3, 15. veals by removing the opposing veil from the heart, and the
Ps. 18, 11. darkness which He has made His secret place. But since upon this men who are of another opinion think to build up their impious doctrine, that in truth the Father of Jesus was sent down to the ancient saints, we must tell them that the words, *To whomsoever the Son will reveal Him,* not only refer to the future time, after our Saviour uttered this, but

also to the past time. But if they will not take this word *reveal* for what is past, they must be told, that it is not the same thing to know and to believe. *To one is given by the Spirit the word of knowledge; to another faith by the same Spirit.* There were then those who believed, but did not know. AMBROSE. But that you may know that as the Son revealed the Father to whom He will, the Father also reveals the Son to whom He will, hear our Lord's words, *Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood have not revealed it to thee, but My Father which is in heaven.* 1 Cor. 12, 8. 9.

23. And He turned Him unto His disciples, and said privately, Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see:

24. For I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.

THEOPHYL. Having said above, *No one knoweth who the Father is but the Son, and to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him;* He pronounces a blessing upon His disciples, to whom the Father was revealed through Him. Hence it is said, *And He turned Him unto His disciples, and said, Blessed are the eyes, &c.* CYRIL. He turns to them indeed, since He rejected the Jews, who were deaf, with their understandings blinded, and not wishing to see, and gives Himself wholly to those who love Him; and He pronounces those eyes blessed which see the things no others had seen before. We must however know this, that *seeing* does not signify the action of the eyes, but the pleasure which the mind receives from benefits conferred. For instance, if any one should say, He hath seen good times, that is, he has rejoiced in good times, according to the Psalm, *Thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem.* For many Jews have seen Christ performing divine works, that is to say, with their bodily sight, yet all were not fitted to receive the blessing, for they believed not; but these saw not His glory with their mental sight. Blessed then are our Ps. 128, 5.

eyes, since we see by faith the Word who is made man for us, shedding upon us the glory of His Godhead, that He may make us like unto Him by sanctification and righteousness. THEOPHYL. Now He blesses them, and all truly who look with faith, because the ancient prophets and kings desired to see and hear God in the flesh, as it follows; *For I say unto you that many prophets and kings have desired, &c.* BEDE. Matthew more clearly calls them prophets, and righteous men. For those are great kings, who have known how, not by yielding to escape from the assaults of temptations, but by mastering to gain the rule over them. CHRYS. Now from this saying many imagine that the prophets were without the knowledge of Christ. But if they desired to see what the Apostles saw, they knew that He would come to men, and dispense those things which He did. For no one desires what he has no conception of; they therefore knew the Son of God. Hence He does not merely say, *They desired to see* Me, but *those things which ye see,* nor *to hear* Me, *but those things which ye hear.* For they saw Him, but not yet Incarnate, nor thus conversing with men, nor speaking with such authority to them. BEDE. For those looking afar off saw Him in a glass and darkly, but the Apostles having our Lord present with them, whatever things they wished to learn had no need to be taught by angels or any other kind of vision. ORIGEN. But why does he say that many prophets desired, and not all? Because it is said of Abraham, *That he saw the day of Christ and was glad,* which sight not many, but few attained to; but there were other prophets and just men not so great as to reach to Abraham's vision, and the experience of the Apostles, who, He says, saw not, but desired to see.

Matt. 13, 17.

Chrys. in Joan. Hom. 8.

Origen. in Cant. l. 2.

John 8, 56.

25. And, behold, a certain Lawyer stood up, and tempted Him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

26. He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?

27. And he answering said, Thou shalt love the

Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.

28. And He said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.

BEDE. Our Lord had told His disciples above that their names were written in Heaven; from this it seems to me the lawyer took occasion of tempting our Lord, as it is said, *And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tempted Him.* CYRIL. For there were in fact certain men who then went about the whole country of the Jews bringing charges against Christ, and saying that He spoke of the commands of Moses as useless, and Himself introduced certain strange doctrines. A lawyer then, wishing to entrap Christ into saying something against Moses, comes and tempts Him, calling Him Master, though not bearing to be His disciple. And because our Lord was wont to speak to those who came to Him concerning eternal life, the lawyer adopts this kind of language. And since he tempted Him subtly, he receives no other answer than the command given by Moses; for it follows, *He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?* AMBROSE. For he was one of those who think themselves skilled in the law, and who keep the letter of the law, while they know nothing of its spirit. From a part of the law itself our Lord proves them to be ignorant of the law, shewing that at the very first the law preached the Father and the Son, and announced the sacraments of the Lord's Incarnation; for it follows, *And He answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind.* BASIL. By saying, *with all thy mind,* He does not admit of any division of love to other things, for whatever love you cast on lower things necessarily takes away from the whole. For as a vessel full of liquid, whatever flows therefrom must so much diminish its fulness; so also the soul, whatever love it has wasted upon things unlawful, has so much lessened its love to God.

Basil. in Ps. 44.

GREG. NYSS. Now the soul is divided into three faculties;

Greg. de Hom. Opif. c. 8.

one merely of growth and vegetation, such as is found in plants; another which relates to the senses, which is preserved in the nature of irrational animals; but the perfect faculty of the soul is that of reason, which is seen in human nature. By saying then the heart, He signified the bodily substance, that is, the vegetative; by the soul the middle, or the sensitive; but by saying the mind, the higher nature, that is, the intellectual or reflective faculty. THEOPHYL. We must hereby understand that it becomes us to submit every power of the soul to the divine love, and that resolutely, not slackly. Hence it is added, *And with all thy strength.* MAXIM. To this end then the law commanded a threefold love to God, that it might pluck us away from the threefold fashion of the world, as touching possessions, glory, and pleasure, wherein also Christ was tempted.

Basil. Reg. fus. ad int. 2. BASIL. But if any one ask how the love of God is to be obtained, we are sure that the love of God cannot be taught. For neither did we learn to rejoice in the presence of light, or to embrace life, or to love our parents and children; much less were we taught the love of God, but a certain seminal principle was implanted in us, which has within itself the cause, that man clings to God; which principle the teaching of the divine commands is wont to cultivate diligently, to foster watchfully, and to carry on to the perfection of divine grace. For naturally we love good; we love also what is our own, and akin to us; we likewise of our own accord pour forth all our affections on our benefactors. If then God is good, but all things desire that good, which is wrought voluntarily, He is by nature inherent in us, and although from His goodness we are far from knowing Him, yet from the very fact that we proceeded forth from Him, we are bound to love Him with exceeding love, as in truth akin to us; He is likewise also a greater benefactor than
ad int. 3. all whom by nature we love here. And again. The love of God then is the first and chief command, but the second, as filling up the first and filled up by it, bids us to love our neighbour. Hence it follows, *And thy neighbour as thyself.* But we have an instinct given us by God to perform this command, as who does not know that man is a kind and social animal? for nothing belongs so much to our nature

as to communicate with one another, and mutually to need and love our relations. Of those things then of which in the first place He gave us the seed, He afterwards requires the fruits.

CHRYS. Yet observe how, almost to the same extent of obedience He requires the performance of each command. For of God he says, *with all thy heart.* Of our neighbour, *as thyself.* Which if it were diligently kept, there would be neither slave nor free man, neither conqueror nor conquered, (or rather, neither prince nor subject,) rich nor poor, nor would the devil be even known, for the chaff would rather stand the touch of fire than the devil the fervour of love; so surpassing all things is the constancy of love. GREG. But since it is said, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,* how is he merciful in taking compassion upon another, who still, by unrighteous living, is unmerciful to himself?

Chrys. Hom. 32. in 1 Cor.

Greg. 19. Moral c. 14

CYRIL. When the lawyer had answered the things contained in the law, Christ, to whom all things were known, cuts to pieces his crafty nets. For it follows, *And He said to him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.* ORIGEN. From these words it is undoubtingly gathered, that the life which is preached according to God the Creator of the world, and the Scriptures given by Him, is life everlasting. For the Lord Himself bears testimony to the passage from Deuteronomy, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God;* and from Leviticus, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.* But these things were spoken against the followers of Valentinus, Basil, and Marcion. For what else did He wish us to do in seeking eternal life, but what is contained in the Law and the Prophets?

Deut. 6 5.

Lev. 19, 18.

29. But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?

30. And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.

31. And by chance there came down a certain

Priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

32. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.

33. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was; and when he saw him, he had compassion on him,

34. And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

35. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.

36. Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?

37. And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

Cyril. The lawyer, when praised by our Saviour for having answered right, breaks forth into pride, thinking that he had no neighbour, as though there was no one to be compared to him in righteousness. Hence it is said, *But he willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?* For somehow first one sin and then another takes him captive. From the cunning with which he sought to tempt Christ, he falls into pride. But here when asking, *who is my neighbour,* he proves himself to be devoid of love for his neighbour, since he did not consider any one to be his
1 John 4, 20. neighbour, and consequently of the love of God; *for he who loves not his brother whom he sees, cannot love God whom he does not see.* Ambrose. He answered that he knew not his neighbour, because he believed not on Christ, and he who knows not Christ knows not the law, for being

ignorant of the truth, how can he know the law which makes known the truth?

THEOPHYL. Now our Saviour defines a neighbour not in respect of actions or honour, but of nature; as if He says, Think not that because thou art righteous thou hast no neighbour, for all who partake of the same nature are thy neighbours. Be thou also their neighbour, not in place, but in affection and solicitude for them. And in addition to this, He brings forward the Samaritan as an example. As it follows, *And Jesus answering him said, A certain man went down, &c.* GREEK EX. He has well used the general term. For He says not, "a certain one went down," but, *a certain man*, for His discourse was of the whole human race. AUG. For that man is taken for Adam himself, representing the race of man; Jerusalem, the city of peace, that heavenly country, from the bliss of which he fell. Jericho is interpreted to be the moon, and signifies our mortality, because it rises, increases, wanes, and sets.

Severus.

Aug. de Ev. l. ii. q. 19.

PSEUDO-AUG. Or by Jerusalem, which is by interpretation "the sight of peace," we mean Paradise, for before man sinned he was in sight of peace, that is, in Paradise; whatever he saw was peace, and going thence he descended (as if brought low and made wretched by sin) into Jericho, that is, the world, in which all things that are born die as the moon. THEOPHYL. Now He says not "descended," but "was descending." For human nature was ever tending downwards, and not for a time only, but throughout busied about a life liable to suffering. BASIL. This interpretation corresponds to the places, if any one will examine them. For Jericho lies in the low parts of Palestine, Jerusalem is seated on an eminence, occupying the crest of a mountain. The man then came from the high parts to the low, to fall into the hands of the robbers who infested the desert. As it follows, *And he fell among thieves.*

Hypognos. lib. 3.

CHRYS. First, we must needs pity the ill fortune of the man who fell unarmed and helpless among robbers, and who was so rash and unwise as to choose the road in which he could not escape the attack of robbers. For the unarmed can never escape the armed, the heedless the villain, the unwary the malicious. Since malice is ever armed with

Chrys. Hom. in loc. Ed. Lat.

guile, fenced round with cruelty, fortified with deceit, and ready for fierce attack. AMBROSE. But who are those robbers but the Angels of night and darkness, among whom he had not fallen, unless by deviating from the divine command he had placed himself in their way. CHRYS. At the beginning of the world then the devil accomplished his treacherous attack upon man, against whom he practised the poison of deceit, and directed all the deadliness of his malice.

Chrys. ubi sup.

AUG. He fell then among robbers, that is, the devil and his angels, who through the disobedience of the first man, stripped the race of mankind of the ornaments of virtue, and wounded him, that is, by ruining the gift of the power of free will. Hence it follows, *who stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed,* for to that man sinning he gave a wound, but to us many wounds, since to one sin which we contract we add many. AUG. Or they stripped man of his immortality, and wounding him (by persuading to sin) left him half dead; for wherein he is able to understand and know God, man is alive, but wherein he is corrupted and pressed down by sins, he is dead. And this is what is added, *leaving him half dead.* PSEUDO-AUG. For the half dead has his vital function (that is, free will) wounded, in that he is not able to return to the eternal life which he has lost. And therefore he lay, because he had not strength of his own sufficient to rise and seek a physician, that is, God, to heal him. THEOPHYL. Or man after sin is said to be half dead, because his soul is immortal, but his body mortal, so that the half of man is under death. Or, because his human nature hoped to obtain salvation in Christ, so as not altogether to lie under death. But in that Adam had sinned death entered in the world, in the righteousness of Christ death was to be destroyed. AMBROSE. Or they stripped us of the garments which we have received of spiritual grace, and so are wont to inflict wounds. For if we keep the unspotted garments we have put on, we cannot feel the wounds of robbers. BASIL. Or it may be understood that they stripped us after first inflicting wounds; or wounds precede nakedness, as sin precedes the absence of grace. BEDE. But sins are called wounds, because the perfectness

Aug. ubi sup. — Aug. de Qu. Ev. l. ii. q. 19. — ubi sup. — Rom. 5, 12.

of human nature is violated by them. And they departed, not by ceasing to lie in wait, but by hiding the craft of their devices.

CHRYS. Here then was man (that is, Adam) lying destitute of the aid of salvation, pierced with the wounds of his sins, whom neither Aaron the high priest passing by could advantage by his sacrifice; for it follows, *And by chance there came down a certain priest that way, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.* Nor again could his brother Moses the Levite assist him by the Law, as it follows, *And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.* AUG. Or by the Priest and the Levite, two times are represented, namely, of the Law and the Prophets. By the Priest the Law is signified, by which the priesthood and sacrifices were appointed; by the Levites the prophecies of the Prophets, in whose times the law of mankind could not heal, because by the Law came the knowledge not the doing away of sin. THEOPHYL. But He says, *passed by,* because the Law came and stood till its time fore-ordained, then, not being able to cure, departed. Mark also that the Law was not given with this previous intention that it should cure man, for man could not from the beginning receive the mystery of Christ. And therefore it is said, *And by chance there came a certain priest,* which expression we use with respect to those things which happen without forethought. AUG. Or it is said, *passed by,* because the man who came down from Jerusalem to Jericho is believed to have been an Israelite, and the priest who came down, certainly his neighbour by birth, passed him by lying on the ground. And a Levite also came by, likewise his neighbour by birth; and he also despised him as he lay. THEOPHYL. They pitied him, I say, when they thought about him, but afterwards, overcome by selfishness, they went away again. For this is signified by the word, *passed him by.* AUG. A Samaritan coming by, far removed by birth, very near in compassion, acted as follows, *But a certain Samaritan as he journeyed came where he was, &c.* In whom our Lord Jesus Christ would have Himself typified. For Samaritan is interpreted to be keeper, and it is said of him, *He shall not slumber nor sleep who keeps Israel; since being*

Chrys. ubi sup.

Aug. ubi sup.

Rom. 3, 20; 8, 3.

Aug. Serm. 171.

Aug. ubi sup.

Ps. 128, 4.

Rom. 6, 9.

raised from the dead He dieth no more. Lastly, when it was said to him, *Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil,* He said He had not a devil, for He knew Himself to be the caster out of devils, He did not deny that He was the keeper of the weak. GREEK EX. Now Christ here fully calls Himself a Samaritan. For in addressing the lawyer who was glorying in the Law, He wished to express that neither Priest nor Levite, nor all they who were conversant with the Law, fulfilled the requirements of the Law, but He came to accomplish the ordinances of the Law. AMBROSE. Now this Samaritan was also coming down. *For who is He that ascended up into heaven, but He who came down from heaven, even the Son of Man who is in heaven.* THEOPHYL. But He says, *journeying,* as though He purposely determined this in order to cure us. AUG. He came in the likeness of sinful flesh, therefore[1] near to him, as it were, in likeness.

John 8, 48. Severus. John 3, 13. [1] secus eum. V. Rom. 8, 3. ubi sup.

GREEK EX. Or He came by the way. For He was a true traveller, not a wanderer; and came down to the earth for our sakes. AMBROSE. Now when He came He was made very near to us by His taking upon Himself our infirmities, He became a neighbour by bestowing compassion. Hence it follows, *And when he saw him he was moved with compassion.* PSEUDO-AUG. Seeing him lying down weak and motionless. And therefore was He moved with compassion, because He saw in him nothing to merit a cure, but He Himself for sin condemned sin in the flesh. Hence it follows, *And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine.* AUG. For what so distant, what so far removed, as God from man, the immortal from the mortal, the just from sinners, not in distance of place, but of likeness. Since then He had in Him two good things, righteousness and immortality, and we two evils, that is, unrighteousness and mortality, if He had taken upon Him both our evils He would have been our equal, and with us have had need of a deliverer. That He might be then not what we are, but near us, He was made not a sinner, as thou art, but mortal like unto thee. By taking upon Himself punishment, not taking upon Himself guilt, He destroyed both the punishment and the guilt. AUG. The binding up of wounds is the checking of sins; oil is the consolation of a good hope, by the

ubi sup. Rom. 8, 3. Aug. Serm. 171. Aug. de Quæst. Ev. ii. 19.

pardon given for the reconciliation of man; wine is the incitement to work fervently in spirit. AMBROSE. Or, He binds up our wounds by a stricter commandment, as by oil He soothes by the remission of sin, as by wine He pricks to the heart by the denunciation of judgment. GREG. Or in the wine He applies the sharpness of constraint, in the oil the softness of mercy. By wine let the corrupt parts be washed, by oil let the healing parts be assuaged; we must then mix gentleness with severity, and we must so combine the two, that those who are put under us be neither exasperated by our excessive harshness, nor be relaxed by too much kindness. THEOPHYL. Or else, intercourse with man is the oil, and intercourse with God is the wine which signifies divinity, which no one can endure unmixed unless oil be added, that is, human intercourse. Hence He worked some things humanly, some divinely. He poured then in oil and wine, as having saved us both by His human and His divine nature. CHRYS. Or, *he poured in wine*, that is, the blood of His passion, *and oil*, that is, the anointing of the chrism, that pardon might be granted by His blood, sanctification be conferred by the chrism. The wounded parts are bound up by the heavenly Physician, and containing a salve within themselves, are by the working of the remedy restored to their former soundness. Having poured in wine and oil, he placed him upon his beast, as it follows, *and placing him upon his beast, &c.*

Greg. Moral c. 8.

Chrys. Hom. in loc.

AUG. His *beast* is our flesh, in which He has condescended to come to us. To be placed on the beast is to believe in the incarnation of Christ. AMBROSE. Or, He places us on His beast in that He bears our sins, and is afflicted for us, for man hath been made like to the beasts, therefore He placed us on His beast, that we might not be as horse and mule, in order that by taking upon Him our body, He might abolish the weakness of our flesh. THEOPHYL. Or He placed us on His beast, that is, on His body. For He hath made us His members, and partakers of His body. The Law indeed did not take in all the Moabites, and the Ammonites shall not enter into the Church of God; but now in every nation he that feareth the Lord is accepted by Him, who is willing to believe and to become part of the Church. Wherefore

Aug. de Quæst. Ev. ii. q. 19.

Isai. 53, 4. LXX. Ps. 49, 12

Ps. 32. 9.

Deut. 23, 3.

Chrys. ut sup. He says, that *he brought him to an inn.* CHRYS. For the Inn is the Church, which receives travellers, who are tired with their journey through the world, and oppressed with the load of their sins; where the wearied traveller casting down the burden of his sins is relieved, and after being refreshed is restored with wholesome food. And this is what is here said, *and took care of him.* For without is every thing that is conflicting, hurtful and evil, while within the Inn is contained all rest and health. BEDE. And rightly He brought him placed on His beast, since no one, except he be united to Christ's body by Baptism, shall enter the Church.

AMBROSE. But as the Samaritan had not time to stay longer on the earth, he must needs return to the place whence he descended, as it follows, *And on the morrow he took out two pence, &c.* What is that morrow, but perchance the day of our Lord's resurrection? of which it was said, Ps. 118, 24. *This is the day the Lord hath made.* But the two pence are the two covenants, which bear stamped on them the image of the eternal King, by the price of which our wounds are Aug. ubi sup. healed. AUG. Or the two pence are the two commandments of love, which the Apostles received from the Holy Spirit to preach to others; or the promise of the present life, and that which is to come. ORIGEN. Or the two pence seem to me to be the knowledge of the sacrament, in what manner the Father is in the Son, and the Son in the Father, which is given as a reward by the Angel to the Church that she may take more diligent care of the man entrusted to her whom in the shortness of the time He Himself had also cured. And it is promised that whatever she should spend on the cure of the half dead man, should be restored to her again, *And whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again I will repay thee.*

Aug. ubi sup. 1 Cor. 7, 15. AUG. The inn-keeper was the Apostle, who *spent more* either in giving counsel, as he says, *Now concerning virgins, I have no commandment of the Lord, yet I give my judgment;* or, in working even with his own hands, that he might not 2 Thess. 3, 8. 1 Cor. 9, 14. trouble any of the weak in the newness of the Gospel, though it was lawful for him to be fed from the Gospel. Much more also did the Apostles spend, but those teachers also in their

time have spent more who have interpreted both the Old and New Testament, for which they shall receive their reward. AMBROSE. Blessed then is that inn-keeper who is able to cure the wounds of another; blessed is he to whom Jesus says, *Whatsoever thou hast spent more, when I come again I will repay thee.* But when wilt Thou retnrn, O Lord, save on the Judgment day? For though Thou art ever every where, and though standing in the midst of us, art not perceived by us, yet the time will be in which all flesh shall behold Thee coming again. Thou wilt then restore what Thou owest to the blessed, whose debtor Thou art. Would that we were confident debtors, that we could pay what we had received?

CYRIL. After what has gone before, our Lord fitly questions the lawyer; *Which of these three thinkest thou was neighbour to him who fell among thieves?* But he said, *He that shewed mercy on him.* For neither Priest nor Levite became neighbour to the sufferer, but he only who had compassion on him. For vain is the dignity of the Priesthood, and the knowledge of the Law, unless they are confirmed by good works. Hence it follows, *And Jesus saith unto him, Go and do thou likewise.* CHRYS. As if He said, If thou seest any one oppressed, say not, Surely he is wicked; but be he Gentile or Jew and need help, dispute not, he has a claim to thy assistance, into whatever evil he has fallen. AUG. Hereby we understand that he is our neighbour, to whomsoever we must shew the duty of compassion, if he need it, or would have shewn if he had needed it. From which it follows, that even he who must in his turn shew us this duty, is our neighbour. For the name of neighbour has relation to something else, nor can any one be a neighbour, save to a neighbour; but that no one is excluded to whom the office of mercy is to be denied, is plain to all; as our Lord says, *Do good to them that hate you.* Hence it is clear, that in this command by which we are bid to love our neighbour, the holy angels are included, by whom such great offices of mercy are bestowed upon us. Therefore our Lord Himself wished also to be called our neighbour, representing Himself to have assisted the half dead man who lay in the way. AMBROSE. For relationship does not make a neighbour, but compassion, for compassion is according to nature.

Chrys. in Heb. Hom. 10.

Aug. de Doc. Chris. lib. i. c. 30.

Matt. 5, 44.

For nothing is so natural as to assist one who shares our nature.

38. Now it came to pass, as they went, that He entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received Him into her house.

39. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard His word.

40. But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to Him, and said, Lord, dost Thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me.

41. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things:

42. But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

BEDE. The love of God and our neighbour, which was contained above in words and parables, is here set forth in very deed and reality; for it is said, *Now it came to pass, as they went, that He entered into a certain village.* ORIGEN.
John 11. The name of which village Luke indeed here omits, but John
Aug. Serm. 103. mentions, calling it Bethany. AUG. But the Lord, who *came*
John 1 12. *to His own, and His own received Him not,* was received as a guest, for it follows, *And a certain woman named Martha received Him into her house, &c.,* as strangers are accustomed to be received. But still a servant received her Lord, the sick her Saviour, the creature her Creator. But if any should say, "O blessed are they who have been thought worthy to receive Christ into their houses," grieve not thou, for He
Matt. 25, 40. says, *For inasmuch as ye have done it to the least of My brethren, ye have done it unto Me.* But taking the form of a servant, He wished therein to be fed by servants, by reason of His condescension, not His condition. He had a body in which He was hungry and thirsty, but when He
Matt. 4 11. was hungry in the desert, Angels ministered to Him. In wishing therefore to be fed, He came Himself to the feeder.

Martha then, setting about and preparing to feed our Lord, was occupied in serving; but Mary her sister chose rather to be fed by the Lord, for it follows, *And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard His word.*

CHRYS. It is not said of Mary simply that she sat near Jesus, but at His feet, to shew her diligence, stedfastness, and zeal, in hearing, and the great reverence which she had for our Lord. AUG. Now as was her humility in sitting at His feet, so much the more did she receive from Him. For the waters pour down to the lowest part of the valley, but flow away from the rising of the hill. Aug. ubi sup.

BASIL. Now every work and word of our Saviour is a rule of piety and virtue. For to this end did He put on our body, that as much as we can we might imitate His conversation. CYRIL. By His own example then He teaches His disciples how they ought to behave in the houses of those who receive them, namely, when they come to a house, they should not remain idle, but rather fill the minds of those who receive them with sacred and divine teaching. But let those who make ready the house, go to meet their guests gladly and earnestly, for two reasons. First, indeed, they will be edified by the teaching of those whom they receive; next also they will receive the reward of charity. And hence it follows here, *But Martha was cumbered about much serving, &c.* AUG. Martha was well engaged in ministering to the bodily wants or wishes of our Lord, as of one who was mortal, but He who was clothed in mortal flesh, *in the beginning was the word.* Behold then what Mary heard, *The Word was made flesh.* Behold then Him to whom Martha ministered. The one was labouring, the other at rest. But yet Martha, when much troubled in her occupation and business of serving, interrupted our Lord, and complained of her sister. For it follows, *And said, Lord, dost Thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone?* For Mary was absorbed in the sweetness of our Lord's words; Martha was preparing a feast for our Lord, in whose feast Mary was now rejoicing. While then she was listening with delight to those sweet words, and was feeding on them with the deepest affection, our Lord was interrupted by her sister. What must we suppose was her alarm, lest the Lord should say to her, "Rise, and help thy

Basil. Const. Mon. c. 1.

Aug. ubi sup.

sister?" Our Lord therefore, who was not at a loss, for He had shewn He was the Lord, answered as follows, *And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha.* The repetition of the name is a mark of love, or perhaps of drawing the attention, that she should listen more earnestly. When twice called, she hears, *Thou art troubled about many things,* that is, thou art busied about many things. For man wishes to meet with something when he is serving, and cannot; and thus between seeking what is wanting and preparing what is at hand, the mind is distracted. For if Martha had been sufficient of herself, she would not have required the aid of her sister. There are many, there are diverse things, which are carnal, temporal, but one is preferred to many. For one is not from many, but many from one. Hence it follows, *But one thing is needful.* Mary

Ps. 73, 28. wished to be occupied about one, according to that, *It is good for me to cling close unto the Lord.* The Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit, are one. To this one He does not bring

Acts 4, 32. us, unless we being many have one heart. CYRIL. Or else, when certain brethren have received God, they will not be anxious about much service, nor ask for those things which are not in their hands, and are beyond their needs. For every where and in every thing that which is superfluous is burdensome. For it begets weariness in those who are wishing to bestow it, while the guests feel that they are the cause of

Basil. in reg. fus. int. 19. trouble. BASIL. It is foolish also to take food for the support of the body, and thereby in return to hurt the body, and to hinder it in the performance of the divine command. If then a poor man come, let him receive a model and example of moderation in food, and let us not prepare our own tables for their sakes who wish to live luxuriously. For the life of the Christian is uniform, ever tending to one object, namely, the glory of God. But the life of those who are without is manifold and vacillating, changed about at will. And how in truth canst thou, when thou settest thy table before thy brother with profusion of meats, and for the pleasure of feasting sake, accuse him of luxury, and revile him as a glutton, censuring his indulgence in that which thou thyself affordest him? Our Lord did not commend Martha when busied about much serving.

AUG. What then? Must we think that blame was cast upon the service of Martha, who was engaged in the cares of hospitality, and rejoiced in having so great a guest? If this be true, let men give up ministering to the needy; in a word, let them be at leisure, intent only upon getting wholesome knowledge, taking no care what stranger is in the village in want of bread; let works of mercy be unheeded, knowledge only be cultivated. THEOPHYL. Our Lord does not then forbid hospitality, but the troubling about many things, that is to say, hurry and anxiety. And mark the wisdom of our Lord, in that at first He said nothing to Martha, but when she sought to tear away her sister from hearing, then the Lord took occasion to reprove her. For hospitality is ever honoured as long as it keeps us to necessary things. But when it begins to hinder us from attending to what is of more importance, then it is plain that the hearing of the divine word is the more honourable. Aug. Serm. 108

AUG. Our Lord then does not blame the actions, but distinguishes between the duties. For it follows, *Mary hath chosen that good part, &c.* Not thine a bad one, but hers a better. Why a better? because it shall not be taken away from her. From thee the necessary burden of business shall one time be taken away. For when thou comest into that country, thou wilt find no stranger to receive with hospitality. But for thy good it shall be taken away, that what is better may be given thee. Trouble shall be taken away, that rest may be given. Thou art yet at sea; she is in port. For the sweetness of truth is eternal, yet in this life it is increased, and in the next it will be made perfect, never to be taken away. AMBROSE. May you then like Mary be influenced by the desire of wisdom. For this is the greater, this the more perfect work. Nor let the care of ministering to others turn thy mind from the knowledge of the heavenly word, nor reprove or think indolent those whom thou seest seeking after wisdom. AUG. Now mystically, by Martha's receiving our Lord into her house is represented the Church which now receives the Lord into her heart. Mary her sister, who sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word, signifies the same Church, but in a future life, where ceasing from labour, and the ministering to her wants, Aug. ubi sup. et Serm. 104. Aug. de Qu. Evang. l. ii. q. 30.

she shall delight in Wisdom alone. But by her complaining that her sister did not help her, occasion is given for that sentence of our Lord, in which He shews that Church to be anxious and troubled about much service, when there is but one thing needful, which is yet attained through the merits of her service; but He says that Mary hath chosen the good part, for through the one the other is reached, which shall not be taken away. GREG. Or by Mary who sat and heard our Lord's words, is signified the contemplative life; by Martha engaged in more outward services, the active life. Now Martha's care is not blamed, but Mary is praised, for great are the rewards of an active life, but those of a contemplative are far better. Hence Mary's part it is said will never be taken away from her, for the works of an active life pass away with the body, but the joys of the contemplative life the rather begin to increase from the end.

Greg. 6. Mor. c. 18.

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